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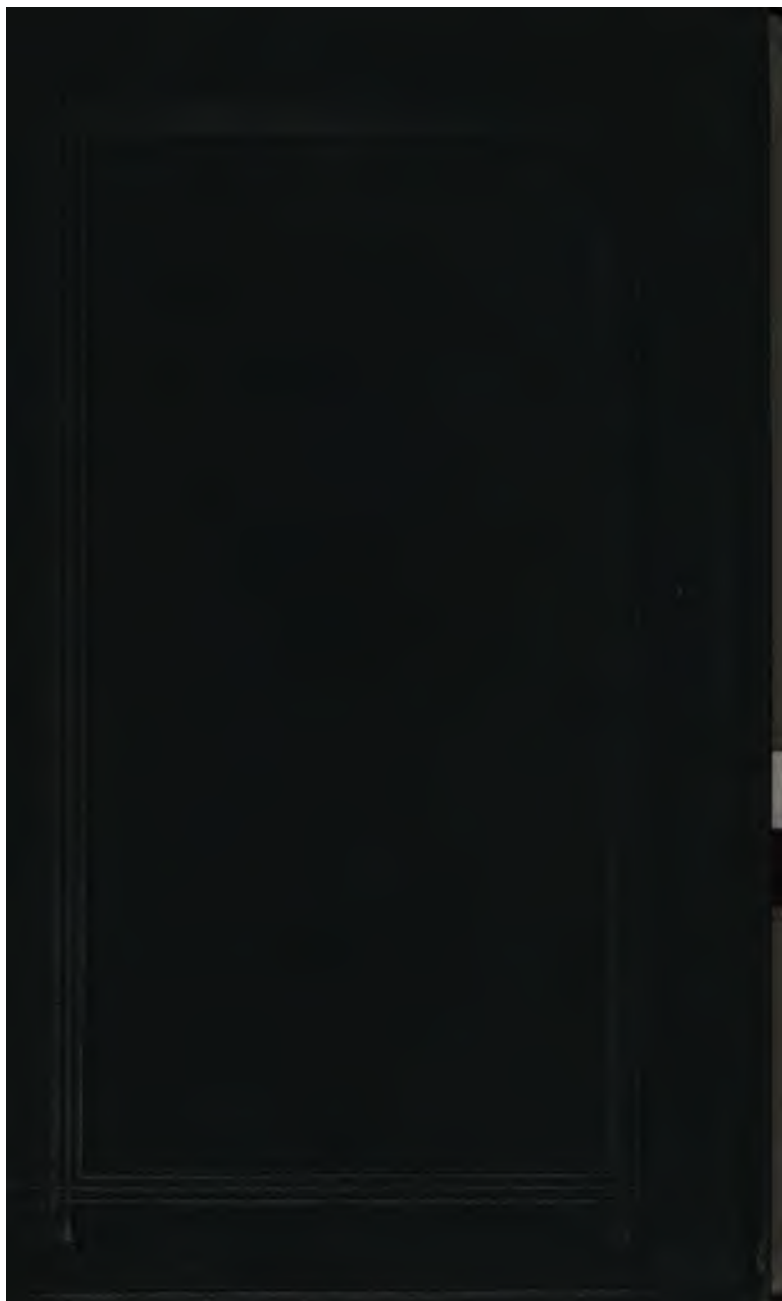
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# THE EPILOGUE

To Previous Works in Prose and Verse.

IN SIX CANTOS.

BY

KENELM HENRY DIGBY.



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# THE EPILOGUE.

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## CANTO I.

### DEFENCE OF POETRY.

'Tis ended—grave and mirthful, like the stage  
That would for both these moods your wants as-  
suage,  
Beginning with the solemn and the grand,  
To finish with what all can understand ;  
For, look you, this strange chequer'd life is such,  
That pass what may we should not cry too much.  
Protracted to such lengths has been our Play,  
That few, I think, to hear the whole would stay.  
Yet still would he who framed it venture now  
To speak once more before his final bow.  
In all leave-takings we are apt to stop  
Too long before we bid the curtain drop ;  
So it will be ; yet sigh or laugh again,  
I hope there may be those who won't complain ;  
Although too grave for some, too light for others,  
Oblivion soon this poor life's labour covers.

Result foreseen, accepted from the first,  
Howe'er for favour might its author thirst.

At first well seen in divers histories,  
In honour, faith, and highest mysteries,  
We gave as 'twere a tragedy to show  
What had pass'd here in ages long ago.  
Then, as exhausted with that serious tone,  
We tried what look'd like comedy, I own.  
Then I took leave of Prose, and thought the Muse  
Would best direct the subjects I might choose ;  
It also seem'd to me that thoughts would pass  
With more conciseness marshall'd in her class,  
And that for one who hated all parade  
It would be best to haunt her quiet shade,  
Where glancing right and left, from thing to thing,  
He might feel free as to himself to sing,  
Or to some one or two who fain would lie  
With him on some soft grass to watch the sky,  
Intent alone on reaping perfect ease,  
To let sharp critics find fault if they please.  
Besides, to treat the Prose of life in jest  
For certain moods of mind at times seems best.  
Then Prose, with its proud, serious, pompous air,  
Is that precisely which it best can spare ;  
While verse appears to merriment a friend,  
Though not renouncing a more worthy end.  
The fabricators too, what's more, of Prose  
Learn secrets which they care not to disclose,  
The memory of which can make them sick,

So little pleased are they with their own trick ;  
And then there's nothing left them but to win  
The Muse's gate-keeper to let them in.  
So that, mistrusting what can be assumed,  
To scale Parnassus thenceforth I presumed ;  
Although at first I never dreamt that all  
Would shout each time they saw me humbly call,  
Whatever e'en their theory might be  
Respecting Prose or any Poetry.  
But e'en our Prose to harsh conclusions led,  
And when we would be cheerful it was said,  
" Some strange delusion has come o'er the man ;  
Account for it let who will if he can."  
This was reproachful—but it soon grew worse  
When we, forsaking Prose, would take to verse.  
Our only comfort being to discover  
That the same blame might fall on any other.  
For now, alack ! in every shape I find  
That to " the sacred Nine " men are unkind,  
And that e'en others who can serve them best  
Must hope for no great favour from the rest.  
Nor is it vulgar taunts they have to fear ;  
A scientific language they will hear  
Somewhat commercial to disparage flights  
In stilted prose in which our age delights ;  
Recalling what some author said of yore,  
Who on the use of Prose set greatest store ;  
For that of Theopompus Photius thought  
Worth more than all the verses could be bought.  
" Two hundred thousand for but two discourses,"

He said, " would yield of profit certain sources ;"  
And really the ancient Rhetoricians  
To our self-plaudits could make no additions.  
The men of our day think without their Prose  
We should again be savages like those  
From whom they say the human race began,  
Such nonsense thought to show the rise of man.  
So even where they do not quite deny  
That Poets ever had a right to fly,  
There are who say that Prose is for our times  
The only fitting language, and that rhymes  
Which some persist most foolishly to write  
With what belongs to verse denote the night  
Through which men groped as on a darksome way,  
Having nought true or sensible to say ;  
That wiser things should occupy these days,  
That useful knowledge needs no Poet's lays,  
Made up of hyperboles with metric rules,  
A fitting pastime but for idle fools.  
'Tis true, of course, when this old World was  
    young,  
What now is told in Prose was mostly sung ;  
The Greeks for laws and songs had the same word,  
Which now, I grant, to us would seem absurd.  
Under the garb of Poets did appear  
All the great sages that to Greece were dear.  
E'en Plato call'd their power a force divine,  
Which far above all man's best wit will shine ;  
The Stagirite opined Philosophy  
Must yield to it superiority,

And no historian would disdain to use  
The name and inspiration of the Muse.  
Old Cadmus and Pherecydes Greece knows  
As the first writers of what we call Prose,  
Which was at least contented, for a while,  
With really a free though figured style;  
And even Greek has ever sought to be  
Than all our modern tongues from rules more free,  
Of grammar even which it dared oppose  
With boldest usage as skill'd Arnaud shows.  
But then the Sophists soon laid hold of it,  
As the best ground for showing off their wit,  
As they are sure to do with every tongue  
Of which the Prose to suit them can be strung.  
To them we owe its skill in strategy,  
Its claims despotic, and its jugglery;  
Which still so often men of judgment shocks,  
That to slight Prose becomes no paradox.  
Although with us no Gorgias may be famed,  
Nor even an Isocrates be named,  
Who of two vowels would dread more the shock  
Than of two armies; for we're thought to mock  
The artifice of an ambitious Prose,  
We yet employ such as the whole world knows.  
Thus Poetry came first, and long before  
'Twas thought that Prose could e'er accomplish  
more.  
But this to our men of the present day,  
Though granted is but knowledge thrown away.  
So we no more invoking ancient ages,

Would mark now what can be alleged for pages  
Of Poetry of any kind, and hear  
What now is urged to make its folly clear ;  
Though Poetry, not skill'd in self-defence,  
Would leave that art to Prose and pass quick hence.  
A Poet would from Massieu<sup>1</sup> e'en recoil,  
As one whose praise in prose the Muse would soil ;  
So little does she like to see paraded  
The merits which her own art have pervaded,  
Disdaining all great pedagogues' applause,  
As if her feelings were her only laws ;  
And thus to play the Orator for her  
Is a fond task to which she would demur.  
But to defend ourselves are we constrain'd  
Briefly to show why she should be retain'd ;  
And though for such a part too weak, I fear,  
As her own champion must I now appear.

The sum of charges, then, 'gainst Poetry  
Appears at least in this our age to be  
The very shallow and audacious thought,  
That sheer abuse of reason is its fault.  
If not "the wine of demons," it is said,  
To argue but a light and empty head.  
But those who cite abuses, now or past,  
Should have their words inverted, foremost last,  
As Sidney well distinguish'd in his day,  
Who to the Muse's scornors this did say:  
"Poetry abuseth not man's wit,

<sup>1</sup> Mem. de l'Acad., tom. ii.

But man's wit is often found abusing it ;  
Nor should what is abused be prized the less,  
But contrariwise then we should confess  
That what does greatest harm when thus abused,  
Does greatest good when it is rightly used."'  
Then too they say that Poets are restrain'd  
With rules, and with senseless forms quite enchain'd,  
Forgetting that the ancient Prose at least  
From rules as strict had never been released.  
Thrasymachus and others would impose  
Severer and more irksome laws on Prose  
Than it was ever thought that verse requires,  
Which the most studied harmony inspires.  
So Prose has its formalities as well,  
Which serve not always the plain truth to tell—  
Its literary paste, we might have said,  
By means of which some meaning can be read,  
A vulgar, tasteless medium to unite  
The writer's thoughts, and them to bring to light,  
To use which men like Joubert have disdain'd  
Who e'en its utter uselessness maintain'd,  
Save as a way to pass the time for some  
Who wait for thoughts that do not always come.  
There still are, as in Greece and Rome we see,  
Some Rhetoricians like theirs not more free,  
Who heeded laws which Cicero explains,  
For keeping Prose rule-bound like Poets' strains.  
Measured gradations had to be observed,  
Proportion's harmony to be preserved ;  
Progressive periods each to numbers bound

By rules exact in Prose were to be found.  
These arts, of course, are now no longer used,  
But judgments still by Prose can be abused,  
Not for the sake of harmony, I own,  
But on account of other causes known.  
Prose has unnumber'd phrases at command  
The sense precise of which you understand,  
Without the least conviction that they yield  
Aught but for contention a fresh field.  
Words consecrated thus by mere convention,  
Express not what these authors fear to mention,  
The secret course of minds that seek to dive  
Through spheres, where that convention can't survive.

Not always Prose will reach the depths of thought,  
Or even grasp its object as it ought;  
It rather shirks it, and with skill pretends  
That what it lays down answers all our ends;  
Whereas the Muse, employing her old verse,  
Can penetrate almost the universe,  
Pierce to the darkest cavities of mind,  
Some true solutions indirectly find,  
And by a word, a couplet, or a line,  
Contrive to yield a sense of the divine,  
While leaving intellect no word to say  
In opposition to her potent sway.  
Give scope to all these scorers of the Muse,  
Let them adopt what terms or style they choose,  
Season with sugar'd words the savoury phrase,  
Strengthen appalling periods to amaze,



Assume a silken language to allure,  
Flowers and verdant hues to charm procure,  
Adopt the reigning fancies of the age,  
Appeal to some famed adamant page,  
Multiply objections and citations  
From writers of all ages and all nations—  
And scarce a sentence vibrates on their tongue,  
From which some error cannot soon be wrung.  
Whether they vent their praises or condemn,  
Their hearers feel disposed to mutter “hem!”  
There’s ever at the bottom, lower down,  
What with mistrust their rhetoric can crown.  
Whereas the Muse, emerging from the deep,  
Brings up some truth that memory will keep;  
While she with that will Pindarize and soar  
Where cunning Prose can follow her no more.  
In Prose, of course, you may devise some plan  
To raise a monument as learning can,  
Or science, too, discarding every aid  
But what from methods of its own is made;  
Yet, even there, these volumes all perused,  
There will be some who think words are abused.  
And still, whatever may be urged and said  
That minds in short have simply been misled.  
What ignorance in knowledge! they will cry,  
With what soft accents will it facts deny;  
Prove and disprove with eloquence so grand  
That none its artful power can withstand,  
So great is still the force of its pretence  
To be the only guardian of good sense.

It has indeed so many tricks to use,  
That simple Truth is often sure to lose.  
Linguistic Potency, to her no friend,  
Has ways in opposition without end.  
Without intending even to mislead,  
To silence others seems its greatest need.  
'Tis common servant to the senses five,  
From which too oft its force it will derive.  
To prejudices also it will bow,  
As all men who observe it must allow ;  
Conveying their impressions with an air  
Which seems to say that all else is unfair,  
To banish whole truths from our mental state,  
And it of highest things depopulate.

Prose can of course be right as well as wrong,  
But Truth's inherent in the flights of song,  
Where its worst dangers are less often found,  
Than where we think we tread on solid ground.  
The tendency of Prose is what we mean  
When we would have its faults and vices seen ;  
And that it has a bias in most times  
Few will deny comparing it with rhymes.  
The errors that Lord Bacon would disclose  
Are chiefly, if not always, found in Prose,  
From which, if Learning would indeed be free,  
'Twere wise to have recourse to Poetry,`  
Which, while it may not value learning much,  
Can yield it sometimes an ethereal touch ;  
Such as I grant he but in brief supposes,

'Midst all the great reforms that he proposes,  
Confessing even that he deems it best  
Not long in such a lower hall to rest,  
As if he thought it much less worth attention  
Than other parts of learning he must mention ;  
Though to disgrace himself he went so try  
As Poetry's divineness to deny.  
Prose has recourse to matches and divorces,  
Both equally unjust, both great resources.  
It matches Faith with Ignorance, and then  
Divorces sentiment from minds of men.  
The Muses never render'd blind but one,  
Thamyris, when they victory had won  
O'er that audacious player on the lyre ;  
And the conditions did that fate require.  
But who could count those blinded by the Prose  
Which darkens oft the plainest truth one knows.

Prose, still considered as a verbal art,  
Is apt to play at times a juggling part.  
Its phrases are a skill'd Magician's tricks ;  
It changes antique marble into bricks,  
Then, with a touch, it makes new bricks to shine  
As oldest things, of origin divine.  
The exigencies, as they're call'd, of style  
Alone suffice a reader to beguile.  
Whether it be the florid or the dry,  
Or that which speaks by figures to the eye ;  
Whether it be the lofty or the pert,  
Incautious hearers it may soon pervert.

Then here to magnify and there diminish,  
And with harmonious cadences to finish,  
Lies in the method of an artful Prose,  
As every one acquainted with it knows.  
But what will not such exigencies need ?  
It is in Prose that you have most to heed,  
Whether it be the cumbrous or the Buskin,  
(As no one would grant sooner than great Ruskin,)  
Keen epigrams, or sly Periphrasis,  
Or Metonymy and Antithesis,  
Synecdoche and arrant transformation,  
Hyperbole and wild amplification,  
Aposiopesis so cunning ever,  
Circumlocution to be trusted never ;  
Epiphonema and polemical,  
The scientific and the technical.  
Apothegmatism and its euphony,  
With Pleonasm and Macrology,  
Anadiplosis, fearful more than all,  
When like street-criers it will shout and call,  
Repeating nicknames like our present Press,  
Cool or impassion'd choices to express,  
Without a previous study of the things  
On which it will employ its sharpest stings ;  
Though really such culture oft is there,  
The wonder is that it can be so fair.  
But when grave Prosemen have diseased opinions,  
Their skill proves how they hate sweet Truth's  
          dominions,  
Coining new words to kindle indignation,

Or rather keep alive that of their nation.  
Though after all what's call'd by many "clever,"  
Proves often only how some will endeavour  
To mystify themselves as well as others  
With some fresh trick that poor Truth wholly  
    smothers,  
Till with their Prose they even seem to be  
In no small danger of insanity.  
To heed their brains if not yet mad they ought,  
When reading what they pen it may be thought.  
Prose now has stores of names that men detest,  
Which it reserves for use against the best;  
These best so qualified, are then proposed  
As representing what's to them opposed.  
The hue and cry will only gather force,  
And this to call up youth is a resource,  
So the whole odium that sheer fools deserve,  
Is made an end against the wise to serve.  
Such is its boldness now, that it will brand  
The noblest words that language can command,  
As odious most, though since the world began  
The things so call'd were deem'd the best for man.  
Prose now is like a blind man with his stick,  
To use which well is its acquired trick.  
Such skilful blows, to the sweet Muse unknown,  
At least most foreign to her wonted tone,  
Can send us, while recoiling with disgust,  
To her as one whom we can better trust,  
Delighted with her under-song of sense  
In which we find no cunning or pretence,

No Rhetorician's culinary art,  
Distorting judgment to corrupt the heart.  
Oh, may it then much rather still be mine  
To hold sweet converse with the sacred Nine.  
For 'tis not so when Poets ye will hear ;  
What prompts the Muse however sung is clear,  
Irrefragable past all man's endeavour  
From absolute immortal truth to sever.  
For sentiment and instinct are a guide,  
More safe than reason, whate'er be its side.  
Prose seldom calls things by their real name,  
And hence the little value oft of fame ;  
For Prose appeals to prejudice, much more  
Than to the judge it boasted of before ;  
Whereas in verse some truth must be express'd,  
And downright falsehood can't in song be dress'd.  
For that requires always long delay,  
While she must fly, and no where ever stay.  
Prose, reasoning, says reason is its guide,  
But Poetry with sentiment will side ;  
And reasoning deceives and has false cards,  
While sentiment its trickery discards.  
O'er Prose's cup great sweetness oft is strown,  
But at the bottom lies what 'twill not own ;  
Arabian spices make a tempting show,  
Ephesian aconite exists below.  
To French esteem'd the clearest of all Prose,  
Instinctively the Sophist always goes,  
Convinced that there he's mostly sure to find  
Some tricks to practise always upon mind ;

Whereas the sparks of light, the Muse will throw  
Are full of dangers for the plants he'd grow.  
She wakens no suspicions in the breast,  
And those who listen feel themselves at rest.  
There's no word-catching to excite distrust,  
And think with her each hearer feels he must ;  
She ne'er accepts plain cool exaggerations,  
Nor takes delight in lengthen'd attestations.  
Responsive quick to Nature faithful ever,  
She must feel free to contradict her never ;  
No more than feels an artist, howe'er wild,  
In that respect the Muse's well-loved child.  
Even when fallen from her highest state,  
Her frankness can her fault extenuate.  
Make no pretences, knowing all to be  
Will this poor smiling, bold, sweet Poetry.  
She must belong to those who make least boast,  
Who of each simple fact are conscious most,  
Who show when aught they would in brief express  
What feeling prompts whatever be its dress.  
Sir Philip Sidney is an honour'd name  
With those who would the Muses shield from  
    blame ;  
He proves that scarcely can a Poet be  
A liar as the Prose writer we see.  
Historians and Physicians often lie,  
Asserting this and that with boldness high ;  
He does not cite of course the daily Press  
But how that serves truth I leave you to guess.  
Whereas the Poet ne'er affirmeth aught

And so thus lying hardly can be caught ;  
He makes no circles round imagination  
To conjure you to believe a false narration.  
Play with the figure that may fancy strike,  
Saith he, or else reject it if you like.  
He cites not authors to establish lies,  
But from his entry to the Muses flies,  
That they may tell him not what is or not,  
But what should or should never be forgot ;  
And verse exceedeth Prose, you can't deny,  
In knitting up of things in memory.  
When most it errs 'tis only to convey  
Some image showing what men used to say,  
While leaving it to common sense and you  
To make distinctions 'twixt the false and true.

Prose seems to like the Rule more than the Good ;  
Not so the Poet can be understood ;  
For 'tis the Good that prompts him most to sing,  
As if the Rule were a forgotten thing.  
So amidst boldest flights, through highest air,  
The Muse heeds only what is true and fair,  
Like some small jewel brightest to the eye,  
As if reflecting in one flash the sky  
To bring it down untarnish'd to the ground  
Where to exceed all setting it is found.  
A lapidary's judgment needed here,  
Would soon make this our estimate most clear.  
Jewels are just the same, however placed ;  
Their setting varies with each age's taste.



'Tis so with gems of Poetry and Prose ;  
The latter changes as each epoch flows ;  
The former's words whatever they may say  
Accord with more than humours of the day.  
Prose is the setting, not worth much alone ;  
Verse is the gem with lustre of its own.  
Witness what visits oft the youthful mind  
In thoughts and aspirations of this kind ;  
Alone, suppose, upon a summer's morn  
The Muse to it appearing then first born,  
Lone with the breeze, the tree, or bending flower  
To feel what's ne'er forgotten from that hour—  
A foretaste of the bliss prepared above  
For those whose life already is but Love.

Then how this Prose is slow describing aught—  
While Poetry flies quick, as swift as thought,  
Leaving behind it Pictures for the eye  
As true as those flash'd by Photography.  
Books, pages, phrases will your Prose require—  
A word suffices for the Poet's Lyre ;  
Though not to make things Algebra he tries  
Like Prose pretending how with that it vies ;  
While 'tis not brevity we find it gaining  
But only abstract views not worth retaining :  
And then, besides, if only  $x$  and  $y$ ,  
'Tis not e'en language ; so we'd pass it by.  
'Tis true there may be cited lines of prose  
Of which in fewest words the beauty shows.  
Laconic brevity is sometimes found

As if we touched the Muse's best loved ground ;  
But these are by some skilful Bard of Prose  
Who what his language wants but too well knows.  
Of course some flights of Poesy are high,  
And oft through clouds that intercept the sky,  
Yet always is there seen some light beycnd  
Of which the heart itself must needs grow fond.  
Her phrensy even never is, we know,  
That worst of all which wears a reasoning show.

And then again, compared with Poetry,  
How Prose to daily matters brings obscurity !  
Yes, doubts and trains of consequences long,  
Which you escape by intercourse with song.  
Inherent in all Prose's composition  
Is art exciting multiplied suspicion.  
With Greeks and Latins both it was the way  
For artisans of style, as in our day,  
To keep their language totally distinct  
From what with common usage could be link'd.  
In Prose no fault was more to be eschew'd  
Than that of speaking like the multitude ;<sup>2</sup>  
And even still in point of fact it ne'er  
Employs the terms and phrases most used there ;  
For English Prose has fashions of its own  
Which e'en in conversation are unknown ;  
So that its boast of greater common sense  
Is after all in some respects pretence.

<sup>2</sup> Arnau sur la Prose-Grecque, Mém. de l'Acad., tom. lxxx.

Prose is, you must admit, the bookish style  
Which Joubert and Montaigne consider'd vile,  
That savours more of ink and of the pen  
Than of the voice and soul and air of men,  
Without which on the paper style exists  
Leaving the mind encompass'd with its mists.  
Whereas the Poet speaks from heart to heart,  
And has the language of its deepest part.  
Then here remark again, what all can see,  
That when we give ourselves to Poetry  
We end not where we ought to have begun,  
As Prose-writers we know have often done,  
With questions to determine the true sense  
Of words which can be construed an offence ;  
For from such false appearances you find  
The Muse most free will leave the human mind.  
But words in Prose will change from time to time  
More than the sounds essential to a rhyme.  
The former oft acquire a novel sense ;  
The ancient style would now be thought pretence.  
Opinions, humours, manners change so fast  
That Prose with sense the same can never last.  
Whereas in fact, the spiritual side  
Of all ideas that in verse reside,  
In every age must clearly be the same  
And warm with soul from which at first it came.

The treatment too and themes of Prose are such,  
It can't be said to humanize us much,  
Or merit so the title still deserved

By Poets from humanity not swerved.  
In truth 'tis interwoven oft with things  
Of which no Poet who is free e'er sings.  
The wars of Homer are in part ideal,  
Unless you say that goddesses are real ;  
But Prose's trumpet fills the universe  
With themes that would sound infamous in verse,  
Such as these ironclads and " Devastations,"  
Without which there's no safety now for nations.  
Why this should be so Prose can best relate  
Which may itself for much congratulate,  
Since what this nineteenth century likes most  
Is that of which its Prose will chiefly boast.  
The subject often is debasing too ;  
Which with the Muse you know would never do,  
Who ne'er accepts a theme that cannot be  
Made to show beauty or sublimity,  
At least to yield an innocent narration,  
Which can amuse as chatty and Horatian.  
With every famous volume that exists  
Prose has to enter oft the noisy lists,  
Works it must combat or at least recall  
That its past trophies may be guarded all,  
And this amidst cacophonous confusion  
Which proves of pleasure surely no diffusion.  
From such encounters it can never cease.  
The Bard meanwhile his *solo* sings in peace.<sup>3</sup>  
Prose has to exercise the mind in what  
The Poet thinks should rather be forgot.

<sup>3</sup> Joubert.

'Tis his part to make choice of exercise  
In which the greatest pleasure always lies.  
For thoughts which Prose leaves dormant in the  
breast,

The Muse calls forth to yield us what is best,  
And the chief faculties that she employs  
Are those precisely most replete with joys.  
Prose as conversant most with real life  
Has necessarily much to do with strife.  
It is concern'd with hatred and suspicion,  
Which surely are to pleasure no addition.  
Who ought to care for prosy quarrels thus  
With which these authors make so great a fuss ?  
Whereas the Muse will exercise the mind  
In matters wholly of another kind,  
That leave impressions gentle, often grand,  
As if she nothing else could understand.  
It is from her that therefore we receive  
The highest pleasures that will none deceive—  
Such as the exercise of mind itself  
Without the least regard to views of pelf,  
Of admiration and of gratitude  
And hope, and wish no duty to elude,  
Of thought upon the beauty of the soul,  
Or of the body e'en its partner sole,  
Or of disinterested and worthy actions  
That yield the heart its highest satisfactions.  
Our Nature, sprung from indigence and wealth,  
The Muse who grants the latter gives it health,  
Enriching it with images so blest

It ought to think that Poetry is best ;  
And, as a wise philosopher has said,  
'Tis better by desires to be led  
To least things than in greatest to have part  
Along with dull inaction of the heart.  
To wish for things is more than to possess  
The same, where you no longings will express.  
But of all treasures that the Muse can bring  
The greatest is when she of Love will sing ;  
And, without love, a Poet is to be  
Esteem'd, you know, a sheer nonentity.  
Than love and friendship nothing is more strong  
To move the heart and make it hate all wrong.  
If these should sometimes start a mystic thought,  
I'd only ask, is that the Poet's fault?  
Saint Catherine of Genoa would cry,  
" Oh, for lost souls in hell what misery,  
Incapable of loving, there to be ! "  
As if she said, " to have no Poetry ! "  
I doubt if she'd regard it a privation  
To lose by death the Prose of any nation.

Another field for marshalling these hosts  
Is History of which Prose loudly boasts,  
Which proves not always to the Muses dear  
As we must pause awhile to notice here.  
The times heroic were with Homer closed,  
As from his own complaints may be supposed ;  
The fabulous were not to Poets due—  
Of which they own'd they nought or little knew ;

While those of reason—perfected became  
What Prose best loves, although an empty name ;  
Since goodness never profited we find  
By that which grew the custom of mankind.  
All that the Poets did then with the fable  
Was to embellish as they might be able.  
From Theseus then to Homer we must trace  
The reign of that so famed heroic race,  
Which was to Poets ever the most dear,  
Of which great Homer left a picture here  
Such as we cannot laud for noble ways  
Without including Poets in our praise.  
For first of all, deducting names of art  
And fables old recall'd to play a part,  
It does appear idolatry was not  
In the grand times Prose leaves to be forgot.  
From which both Greece and Rome itself were free,  
There being not a trace of it to see  
Throughout all Homer, as wise men have shown,  
Whatever else we have to blame and own.  
Sons of Apollo, Neptune, even Jove,  
Were pompous names by which the Poet strove  
To dignify his heroes, merely men,  
To whom no real worship was paid then.  
In times heroic thus of Poetry  
We trace no statues for this infamy.  
Nor Greece, nor Rome in his age such things knew,  
And proof of this is singular to view.  
The Poet shows us only raised up hands  
To signify to Heaven their demands.

Little to them of course was clearly known  
Of the true common Father that we own ;  
And so their mode of worship seem'd more cold  
Than what in Christian usage we behold.  
These ancients, praying high Heaven, always stood  
And kneel to kings and mortals only would ;  
But when their sculptured Deities seem'd men  
To them they knelt as what was proper then ;  
And if the Romans also standing pray'd  
It is that statues with them were not made  
In these first ages, as Augustin said,  
To purer knowledge having first been led.  
So when the Poet shows men standing thus  
With hands upraised, he tells the fact to us.<sup>4</sup>  
From other superstitions no less free  
The pious Greeks of Homer's time we see.  
Adore and sacrifice they did we know  
And hold that Heaven conducted things below ;  
Yet were they neither cruel nor austere,  
As from their songs and dances do appear.  
Love of their country, loyalty to kings,  
These too were all their old Poetic things.  
'Twas not till later that divisions sprung ;  
Till then their knightly union could be sung ;  
As it was that which led to punish crime  
These kings to Troy in the heroic time.  
Respect too for Heaven caused respect for kings,  
Another virtue that the Poet brings,  
For parents and old age respect no less—

<sup>4</sup> Mém. de l'Acad., tom. lxxvi.



All this alike wears a Poetic dress,  
As did the thought that strangers and poor men  
As come from God should be regarded then.  
Simple but just ideas did the Muse,  
Frankness and friendship, in those times infuse;  
For sensibility besides she made them first  
By which she would impart a noble thirst.  
Then music, not what moralists could say  
Was thought enough to guard Penelope.  
But what will shock our Prose the worst of all  
Is the harsh name that they would warfare call.  
Achilles owns he loves a peaceful life  
Amidst his dear relations far from strife;  
And wise Ulysses ever thought no joy  
So great as to have nought to do with Troy.  
The times heroic of the Poet thus  
With all our Prose might yield a hint to us,  
To show war's horrors and destructions must  
As a profession waken but disgust.  
Such were the minds of these heroic men  
As the Poetic fire had made them then.  
So that the praise of noblest history  
Must be no less the praise of Poesy.  
But things are greatly changed since those old  
times,  
And later annals none should tell in rhymes.  
Besides, I think that Poets all inspired  
Could scarcely tell what now is oft admired.  
Impossible, they'd find it e'en to say  
The party jargon of the present day.

I blame not Prose when history unrolls  
Her long monotonous perplexing scrolls,  
Nor would I all her difficulties trace  
Which Prose when meeting seldom can efface.  
But e'en supposing first all things exact  
What skills it telling in detail each fact,  
What no one upon earth will care to know,  
Of which no less it makes so great a show ?  
Its Father, claiming 'honour from each Muse,  
Leaves us, I fear, not very much to choose  
Between the vices of the times he drew  
And those which now are thought to be so new.  
I grant the Pagan thoughts at least in name  
As ours at present cannot be the same.  
Impossible were now their blindness all  
That gave such proof of man's primeval fall.  
There is a public sense and an opinion  
Due to the Christian Church's long dominion,  
Which has so changed and modified all ground  
And made e'en bad men oft have judgment sound,  
That what is told of other times will seem  
A libel on humanity—a dream.  
But still, however startling now and then,  
Herodotus himself ascribes to men  
Crimes and mistakes so like what now we see  
That e'en his pages breathe monotony.  
All for more money then was said and done ;  
The same dull course have these last races run.  
Life is still that Medusa's raft where friends,  
With daggers drawn dispute till their life ends

For a suck'd lemon suck'd some hundred times,  
To suck once more prepared for any crimes.  
So far it is the subject that we blame ;  
But then its treatment often cries for shame.  
For such is still the evil in men's hearts  
That Prose will chiefly seek to play those parts  
In which its skill is found in strict alliance  
With that which has on Truth no sole reliance ;  
Till, what seems rather strange, on Christian ages,  
Prose will boast most of its misleading pages.  
All differences then it will ignore,  
And show men just like Pagans as before.  
So that it seems then even to endeavour  
To make things more monotonous than ever.  
It speaks alone of nations who adhered,  
Like all barbarians once we know so fear'd,  
To such respect for Force, and Force alone  
That all but soldiers were dishonour'd grown,  
Even in Greece, Parnassus full in view  
And yet where war alone you'd think they knew,  
No other occupation esteem'd grand  
But that of men who have a sword in hand,  
Except at Corinth where the arts supplied  
Employments that in honour with them vied.  
Prose seems concern'd only with this rage  
For Force that fills most the old heathen page.  
And we can't hear it tell of Christian Rome  
Without demanding why from Truth 'twill roam ?  
The pages of La Gournerie have told  
What that Rome often saw in ages old ;

And sooth, I think, no sadder book can be  
Than that which owns what she's been forced to  
see.

No hateful deeds can be at any time  
Which will not with her later annals chime.  
But Prose elicits from that History,  
Nought that can ward off this monotony,  
And so must needs come in for part in blame  
When dwelling so on things that are the same.  
Pointing at evil always to men's eyes  
It special pleading like a Lawyer tries,  
Without the least wish ever to distinguish—  
While using art the light left to extinguish.

Then coming to relate the deeds of foes  
Declared to Christian Rome, which they oppose,  
We find that Prose is not a thing to trust,  
That its best skill is shown when 'tis unjust.  
While sooth in this regard the Poets stand  
On elevations which respect command,  
Or rather in our times upon a throne  
Which Prose not e'en attempts to make its own—  
As when with Pindar the grave Muse proclaims  
What Prose resists (I will not cite men's names)  
A fact that many now would deem untrue,  
But in his words I'll give it here to you:  
"Time which produces all things never can,  
With all its power, do certain things for man.  
No time can change, whatever course be run,  
What once was justly or unjustly done,

Or cause it not to have been done." That's what  
No Prose can alter and no interest blot.  
Such is the sentence of the Muses here  
Which to historians ought to be most dear.  
But they, unmoved by Laws eternal, find  
In ancient deeds occasion for their mind  
To exercise its wit and overthrow  
The judgments of all ages that we know.  
For Prose will try to varnish or to hide  
The crimes of those upon its favour'd side,  
And so has oft attempted to reverse  
A law coeval with the universe.  
Prose too with all its boast cannot agree  
E'en with itself on themes of History.  
Paterculus and Tacitus will paint  
Tiberius as a monster and a saint.  
If only these write, which are we to trust ?  
Is it the second rather than the first ?  
Timon of Athens surely will be found  
For unanimity in Prose safe ground ;  
But Plutarch and the rest of them are wrong,  
Says Tanneguy le Fèvre, not in song ;  
"And no more honest man" he says, "could be,  
Or one more fraught with soft humanity."  
"A most judicious writer," too he's styled  
By Resnel ; so then must have been beguiled  
Laertius, Pliny, Cicero as well,  
Who Shakspeare's version of the story tell.  
Then the grave Photius has a version new  
For many facts which we all thought we knew ;

So that the Prose he read which was so clear  
Would make what was thought certain disappear.  
This Prose which boasts of being so exact  
Seems therefore contradicted by the fact;  
Or in its clear expression what great use  
When it is open this way to abuse?  
Whereas the Poet, passive to events,  
To facts and not to any aims assents,  
Even although the facts should be opposed  
To what he always wish'd and e'en supposed;  
As when he feels obliged to own and say  
(What least of all he'd like to own to-day)  
'Twas no Republic but a tyrant king  
That caused the sorrows which disunion bring.  
In fact, what rules him ever, Inspiration,  
A source of Love, praise, blame, and indignation,  
Can ne'er be used to outrage common sense,  
The force of passion banishing pretence;  
And so the cool designing plans of art  
Are left to Prose as Reason without heart.  
Scott as a Poet feels obliged to use  
Words Prose rejects and use them like the Muse.  
Monks, Priests, and Saints are ever on his tongue.  
In their true sense which only could be sung.  
For Melrose Abbey could possess no charm  
If from such cells came only lies and harm.  
'Tis true the ancient chroniclers are just;  
Them when relating what they knew, we trust.  
But Prose can claim no merit from their truth  
Since fine prose-writers they were not forsooth,

Like those by whom it is so oft disguised  
That at no falsehood readers are surprised.  
Now, History is the fortress of all Prose,  
And if that fall, what's left it to oppose  
The gentle invitations of the Muse  
Some other subject for your thoughts to choose ?

Or would you now the state of letters cite  
And to their study Prose-lovers invite ?  
Prose seems more apt to render men unfair  
Of which in no age were examples rare,  
Since e'en Lactantius, as a Christian, blames  
Unjustly and his own zeal only shames,  
The verses of Lucilius where he sings  
What the best virtue is and what it brings.  
Prose is a sharp tool now in many a hand  
The best and greatest men to wound or brand,  
Of whom to sing the Muse would feel inspired  
As of great Newman from vain strife retired.  
Prose like a serpent fastens on its man  
And then to crush him will do all it can.  
No moderation in the use of strength,  
The victim in its toils must sink at length.  
Hence one who knew it well said lately this :  
" Trust me, its object it will never miss.  
If it accused me of my father's death,  
To contradict it would be wasting breath ;  
For if I pleaded innocence to-day,  
To-morrow it would prove still more and say  
That I had also my own mother slain ;

Such Prose to combat is an effort vain.  
Deny a thing, and next day it will show  
That neither you nor I the truth can know.  
All things, of course, 'twill say can be denied  
By those who have to favour some one side.  
Yes; say he did not do it, if you will,  
He was a man prepared to do it still.  
If 'twas not him, it must have been his brother.  
He has not one. Then 'twas of his some other."  
Prose will assert, insinuate, suppress—  
It has a noble instrument—the Press.  
Yet on its journals only fix your eye  
And see how Prose can twist most things awry,  
Day after day the same tricks ever using,  
And bold as if no truth it was abusing.  
When by the zeal of error thus inspired,  
The greatest wonder is it grows not tired  
Such stale and tedious stratagems applied  
To gain the victory for some one side.  
These "articles" that journal readers suit  
Abound with talent; that is past dispute.  
Then judgments are express'd with wondrous might,  
But what I'd ask is, Are they always right?  
Take what you like: is no point strain'd or wrong?  
Is there a thought you could transfer to song?  
The nicknames of the Press I think would be  
A strange harsh sound if used in Poetry;  
Though statesmen's wits may seek to frame some  
more  
Which in such contests were not known before.



To tack on to the Vatican an "ism,"  
To swell the jargon of a spiteful schism.  
The worship of bad Echos is not found  
Within the Muse's consecrated ground;  
Nor can malicious irony prevail  
When it is she who chronicles the tale;  
For she supposes men are like herself,  
And what's opposed to Love leaves on the shelf.  
And then in revolutionary times  
Is Prose what you'd prefer to Poet's rhymes?  
Orpheus tamed lions, tigers with his verse;  
Prose has made men than lions, tigers worse.  
Amphion's verses raised Thebes as we own,  
Prose has whole states and cities overthrown.

There is one fact, whatever you oppose;  
Essentially a journalist is Prose.

Or take some far-famed novels of the day,  
Is that the Prose on which your praise will stay?  
I grant it may prove useful in this sense,  
Which is itself not wanting in offence—  
That it exposes human crime so well,  
We feel the dire necessity of Hell,  
And can its certainty most plainly show  
As when we read the famed Gaboriau,  
Though in his "golden clique" no doubt he err'd  
In representing Hell as not deferr'd,  
But as consummate in the present life,  
Which is with well-known facts to be at strife.

But not to take account of that grim gain  
From all this language I would ask again  
What is there to please a noble mind  
That would provision for its cravings find ?  
Both Sterne and Fielding Poetry evince,  
But what say you of those who have come since ?  
And Sterne, I say, whose faults should be forgiven  
For having view'd things with the smile of  
Heaven.

The French and English novels of our time  
Which have long silenced all the minstrel's rhyme,  
Display no doubt great power in the pen  
To paint and praise a certain race of men.  
Such prose is an exponent clearly fair  
Of what seems epidemic in the air  
We have to breathe, howe'er we may desire  
To dwell in spheres that may be, if not higher,  
Somewhat unlike what we must daily see ;  
There's small amusement in monotony.  
And then besides, the scenes Prose authors paint  
Suffice at times to justify complaint.  
All readers are not stockbrokers to know  
The language even of Gaboriau.  
The kind of knowledge that these tales require  
Seems that which some at least cannot admire.  
Such business matters may seem vastly fine  
To office clerks and others in that line ;  
But really 'tis too much to expect  
There should be none who pleasures such neglect.  
Their very titles indicate a choice

Of subjects in which all men can't rejoice ;  
As in that novel called "The Lerouge Case,"  
Accordant more with an attorney's place  
Than with the chamber of a student such  
As themes like that are never seen to touch.  
Those who will seek to hear of worldly ways  
And of our high life's customs in these days  
May like to see the whole, and catch the tone  
Of what the French blame in its "half" alone.  
But who that is familiar with that whole  
Can find contentment in it for his soul  
When reading these prose painters of the things  
That no true Poet without anguish sings ?  
Upon the whole, of life as known around,  
Methinks enough, yes, quite enough, is found  
Without demanding portraits from the pen  
Best skill'd in sketching such a tribe of men.

If on another side, regarding Prose,  
We turn to the much read memoirs of those  
Who give us their experience of the great,  
And tell of nobles who have served the state,  
The beauty of the style, at least to me,  
Seems somewhat wanting in variety,  
I would not rudely openly betray  
My own opinion of the present day,  
To imitate that goat-girl of Provence,  
At Avignon seeking to be hired once,  
Who, ask'd if the French tongue to her were  
known,

Replied, preferring music of her own,  
"Be tranquil, madame, not much will suffice  
To teach me all your jargon in a trice ;"  
Though in esteeming her soft language she  
Left an example to embolden me.  
But truly from such Prose I'd rather fly  
To herd with Poets or with such as try  
By means of thought at least and feeble verse  
To give up state things for the universe.  
Perhaps I'd find they were not Poets born,  
But doggrel would not fill me with such scorn.

And then I'd ask in graver matters still,  
Can Prose suffice all wishes to fulfil ?  
Have moralists in prose nought to deplore ?  
Have theologians e'en a faultless store ?  
With all their school-points arguing so long,  
Which no one e'er can tune to suit a song.  
Prose Pascalizes, amplifies, explains,  
And more than what is authorized maintains.  
Enough is not a scriptural relation ;  
It seems to have some special information.  
'Tis Poets more than doctors who'd decide  
That this agrees not with the Christian side.  
In all things Prose is too precise for me ;  
The Poet leaves things still a mystery.  
He has no artificial schemes devised  
To show what comes down from Heaven method-  
ized.  
Prose follows methods even in regard

To matters which that process should discard ;  
But Poetry of such will never boast,  
And while unfinish'd it will know the most.  
For views laid down as being quite complete,  
As Prose pretends, are often self-deceit.  
The Poet wrapt in themes above us high,  
Will be the first to find that clouds are nigh.  
He feels himself encompass'd with them still,  
And knows that be so too he ever will.  
Not so the dealer in ambitious prose,  
Who thinks that he sees clearly, all things knows.  
Prose with audacious ease surveys the Peak,  
And ne'er will own he finds himself most weak ;  
He thinks he scales it, measures it, and then  
Coolly propounds his theory to men,  
Cool as a lawyer seated in his court,  
To which, he says, all men must have resort.  
Unawed by that great altitude which wrung  
From the Apostle words that should be sung,  
He likes the clear, coarse phrases of the day,  
And uses them in a religious way.  
Penal, work, payment, satisfaction, debt,  
Nought known to Pentonville will he forget.  
So which is best for theologic lore  
I leave you to decide ; I'll plead no more.

Oh, Scribes so famous, how you prose will stalk,  
Like those who threaten by their very walk !  
"All souls" was long the old Poetic phrase,  
But "Holy souls" suit more prosaic days

That will presume to say what God must do,  
That nought inexplicable can be true ;  
That will in thought with pompous steps repair  
To Hell, and say who clearly must be there.  
For Prose is still the same, and can't endure  
To leave a theme unless of all 'tis sure.  
Prose should have books of cookery, to show  
How tyrants can be used and dress'd up so  
As theologians even to appear,  
With terms exact, all dreadful to cause fear.  
Despots there are, with soft words wrapp'd in  
black,

Whose thoughts seem pity for mankind to lack.  
Who dares confront or meet them face to face,  
Unawed by such a measured, haughty pace !  
Yet in their adamantyne garb I see  
A weakness never felt by Poetry.  
While grim Jansenius even they exceed,  
I'm not dispensed from feeling greatly need  
Of that deep, prudent, and capacious mind  
Which with the Poet oftenest you find,  
That marshals all its flights by charity,  
And seeks no other regularity,  
Suspicious of what aims to be complete,  
And soaring above logical deceit,  
To own it sees the best by fits and starts  
And farthest when it corresponds with hearts.  
Now that is but to need the Muse's wing,  
Or rather want to hear what she will sing.  
For though she will not often take her flight

Where Prose makes all things gloomy as the night,  
As when great Bourdaloue hears only chains  
Rattling for mortals where they suffer pains,  
She thinks it better through bright clouds to  
soar,

Where aye of joy and mercy she hears more.  
She sends forth Popes, as in the middle ages,  
Who write for certain notes explaining pages  
That they had found in Terence rather hard,  
So little would they Poetry discard ;  
Or others, like great Innocent the Third,  
Demanding that all poor men should be heard,  
And that for all alike the laws should be  
The same—a dictate too of Poetry.  
For theologians, moralists as well,  
Should feel the puissance of her glorious spell ;  
She shows great Doré's picture of the stairs  
Down which descends the Christ who all repairs,  
When from some silent girl will fall a tear  
At seeing goodness thus majestic near.  
For painting such is Poetry quite pure,  
Which best and quickest thoughtlessness can  
cure,

Ay, quicker than of words your whole array,  
Accentuate, divide them as you may.  
In short, it seems without the Muse's aid,  
That all grave study is defective made.  
Left to themselves, these Prose writers affect  
To know too much, at least as some suspect.  
Prose in an English Drama is accused

Of having ancient languages abused,  
By false adjustments for the vulgar ear,  
Pretending to bring distant matters near,  
Of wrongfully imprisoning fair truth,  
Of using clap-traps to mislead raw youth,  
Of loving to philosophize in schools  
Till subtlest sages seem the greatest fools,  
Of countenancing crimes 'gainst states and kings  
By giving false names to all public things,  
Of being wanton, fond of angry strife,  
With jest and taunts to spoil the joys of life,  
Of being prostitute, with no reserve,  
Forgotten feuds reviving to preserve.  
Whereas at last consenting to attend  
To what the Muse to sing of will descend,  
We seem to catch a glance of what is higher  
Than ever Prose attempted to inspire,  
To make the mind more apt for things divine,  
Though what's beyond us it will not define.  
'Tis only gleams that dart and pass away,  
But you can't bend or decompose the ray.  
There's nought to change or criticize with art;  
Their lustre brief illuminates the heart.  
Poets were "makers" in the Grecian tongue,  
As if it were creation when they sung,  
The maker of these makers having given  
An efficacy e'en like that of Heaven,  
When with the force of truth almost divine,  
They cause some beauty in the mind to shine.  
Their name is therefore far above what men



Call learning or the sage's wisdom then.  
The philosophic, learned man can teach,  
The highest object that mere Prose can reach ;  
The Poet moves and makes desire to spring,  
Which is a higher and a nobler thing ;  
For to be moved to do that which we know  
Exceeds what ever in the mind can grow.  
To move must even be the cause of teaching,  
For who is taught that is not to that end reaching?  
And moving leads to action which is more  
Than mind without a soul, whate'er its store.  
Prose to views abstract much more often leads ;  
But poetry to waken feeling speeds.  
The force of Prose is intertwined with speech,  
The Poet's picture will the tongue outreach—  
Picture that leaves the words of song to be  
Forgotten in that silent Poetry  
Where no ear reaches and no eye beholds  
The fair idea which no art controls.  
It brings within the sight e'en of the mind  
An image that in language you can't find ;  
Which strikes and pierces with mysterious skill  
What Prose has never done and never will.  
The Muse enraptured heard within the heart,  
You feel that she has play'd the highest part.  
Prose invites Prose to scribble on for ever ;  
The Poet sings and is refuted never.

But to have sung is not our sole offence.  
“ Our choice of subjects shows a want of sense.”

Since these fresh accusations will be made,  
Let's meet them, and seek nothing to evade.

## CANTO II.

## STREET PLAY.

In our past Lyrics we must own  
There was an unartistic tone,  
Almost plebeian, some would say,  
Or what they'd call a vulgar way,  
Such as Petronius so abjured,  
As verses not to be endured ;  
Since "nothing that the people know  
A Poet should be found to show ;"  
Though that is not so clear to me  
In practice or in theory.  
No doubt the charge is therefore true ;  
I hope we've not offended you.  
We live at present in an age  
When many hate a simple page.  
As they scorn music, howe'er sweet,  
That only suits, they say, the street.  
Lecocq and Offenbach offend ;  
To German prodigies they wend.  
All must be high-flown, artificial,  
Or science counts it prejudicial.  
You always must look grave or cry,

Though you've no earthly reason why.  
For me, grown weary of such heights,  
The first chance story more delights ;  
So hear me sing of what pass'd lately,  
Though it is anything but stately.  
And, since my said offence is clear,  
I'll give another instance here,  
Not quite Wordsworthian, I must own,  
Since it shows nothing of one's own,  
As drawn from one's most deep interior,  
But things one sees, "of course inferior."

In a bright suburb that those know  
Who towards fair Highgate have to go,  
Thinking, perhaps, with this and that,  
Of Whittington and of his cat,  
Whose name inscribed upon a stone  
To the way-side imparts a tone,  
There is a certain quiet street  
In which a band of lads would meet  
For half an hour or more each time,  
Until they'd hear the school-bell's chime.  
Some 'prentices would join the rest,  
As if that all should play were best ;  
And aprons flutter'd in the race  
With those who of the school bore trace,  
In having satchels at their side,  
Or in a string their books but tied.  
These youths of London seem'd to think  
They should not let its glory sink

By thrumming of their caps at home,  
When they could all be up to roam.  
So lest it should be said for shame  
That they were spiritless and tame,  
Young hopes of valour were intent  
On doings fine with merriment,  
As if twelve companies were met  
Under some new Sir Dagonet.  
Read the old Play—'tis just the same,  
Only for Ralph some other name,  
This new game would so much resemble  
That old one when they would assemble.  
They call, they wrangle, and they shout ;  
Each neighbour then knows who are out ;  
With mirth and loudness for their aim,  
They heedlessly pursue their game,  
With laughter in their eyes, no sneer  
To make a passing stranger fear,  
Although he might have blest his stars  
When he had walk'd beyond their jars.  
But what is a more grave affair,  
The ball they strike flies everywhere.  
Some months ago a pane they broke,  
Which for the tenants was no joke ;  
Then frighten'd at the deed they wrought,  
These boys ran off ; not one was caught.  
So it continued day by day,  
They still would gather to have play,  
Upon their own mirth living most  
And master's means, a joyous host.

When taken singly, modest, shy,  
Collectively a rough bold fry.  
Yet was there somewhat in them still,  
Which show'd at least an honest will.  
These were not boys more tough than bears,  
Like those each one of whom so swears  
As if of shoe-leather were made  
Their souls, for they were much more staid,  
Mere flat-caps guilty but of noise ;  
But quiet people hate all boys.

The householders seem'd quite afraid  
To try to stop this daring raid.  
No one would venture to look out  
To see what it was all about,  
Until a certain damsel thought  
That to restrain them some one ought.  
It was a girl both arch and witty,  
Though for all injured full of pity,  
Finding each instant in herself,  
Resources oft denied to pelf ;  
Like that " young Mary " in the tale  
Whose instincts ever could avail  
To set herself and others right,  
However sad could be their plight,  
As George or Madame Sand might tell  
In brief incomparably well.<sup>1</sup>  
This sweet, fair daughter then resolved  
To have this troop of boys dissolved.

<sup>1</sup> La Mare au Diable.

She watch'd them, and soon found that they  
Had one whom they would all obey,  
Who'd call a muster and proclaim  
How each should answer to his name,  
Their persons and munitions thus  
Inspected with the greatest fuss,  
Till the contending files would try  
Which side could gain the victory.  
She found that some were boys so grown  
That scarcely to her were they known ;  
She found too that the chief they had  
Was her own grocer's civil lad.  
Therefore the next day when he'd call  
She would confront him in her hall.  
"So you," she said, "I find, are now  
Midst those who make this precious row.  
I only wish you were to hear  
What some one threatens who lives near.  
Oh, Heaven forgive me for this guile!"  
She said unto herself the while ;  
For sooth she knew of no one there  
Who seem'd inclined the boys to dare ;  
Not one of whom by petting could  
Be quite persuaded to be good.  
"Do, there's a dear !" would never tell,  
Though in the song it may be well ;  
And therefore now a little awe  
Was wanted on the spot, she saw ;  
So she repeated, "'Tis a man  
Who's bent on doing all he can ;

And of this fact you may be sure,  
These freaks of yours he won't endure.  
You'll be in trouble before long,  
If you keep doing what is wrong.  
Why not repair to yonder field,  
Which space for all you want will yield ?  
Why choose our street to make this noise,  
And head so many of these boys ?  
There you would no one hurt or tease  
Yet your own hearts as fully please.  
Good habits make a child a man,  
But bad make monsters of you can.  
Come, you and I are friends, so part,  
And you will then have not to smart."  
"Well, you are right," replied he ; "Miss,  
I had not thought enough of this.  
We'd better drop it from this day,  
And give up our accustom'd play."  
The girl, who saw him changed to sight,  
Then said, as quickly as she might,  
"Indeed you'd better ; take my word,  
Or shortly you'll all look absurd."  
"Well, it is time we dropp'd it," said  
The boy, who rather hung his head.  
"Truly it is," said she, "high time,  
Policemen call such games a crime."  
Red as a peony withdrew  
The once bold captain of the crew.  
But what is stranger, ne'er again  
Had any neighbour to complain.

His influence must have been great,  
To finish things at such a rate.  
"No more there, boys, come no more there,"  
He must have said, "let us take care.  
Whilst we are still alive, no, never  
Down that there road must we run ever."  
And sure enough, then came to be  
Collapsed at once that chivalry.  
The quiet street was as before,  
And cries and shouts were heard no more.  
So docile is the London youth  
To follow what it thinks the truth.

### CANTO III.

#### THE ROAD-SIDE SEAT.

FROM other blame we must defend  
Our play as we approach the end.  
And play I style e'en all its lore,  
For from the first it was no more.  
Then some I doubt not have complain'd  
That no great themes have been retain'd,  
Our later subjects being such  
As could not interest people much ;  
Since all must now seek information,  
Without which "there's no education."



Who cared to hear of Wayside Inns ?  
Such knowledge no approval wins ;  
And even Horacè said of old  
That only great things should be told.  
Just ask the " Quarterly Review "  
Or " Fortnightly," which is more new.  
Well, our sole answer at the end  
Is in the same way to offend,  
From hoping still that some may find  
They can at least amuse their mind,  
By watching incidents each day,  
In just our own accustom'd way,  
As the same Horace used to do,  
And tell them all minutely too—  
Sly rogue, to make so great a fuss,  
Yet like so much what pleases us.

How well would it have been for some  
If to this state of mind they'd come,  
To cherish no " immense " vain thought  
As if to rule all things they ought,  
To end with some grand-sounding words  
Later caught up by foolish herds ;  
So tarnishing a for-ner fame  
To leave, as knowing most, a name !  
From such ambition to be free  
*Facilitates felicity.*

What simple pleasures are in store  
For one who never sighs for more !

What little things suffice for him  
To make them quite o'erflow the brim !  
A Poet famous in our times  
Suggests a theme for some such rhymes.  
Alluding to a scene he saw,  
'Tis thus he would the portrait draw  
Of one found watching a whole lot  
Of juveniles who chose the spot  
For having various kinds of play ;  
And this is what he'd make him say.  
" Ambassador and statesman too  
I've been, as is well known to you.  
The Saint-Esprit, the Toison-d'or,  
Saint Andrew's cordon too I wore ;  
And after all now I find best  
To watch these children and take rest,  
While they draw figures on the sand  
Which makes me quite forget the grand.  
Yes, I have found no greater joys  
Than thus to watch these playful boys.  
René and Christian Faith I've sung ;  
I've been first poets chief among ;  
Napoleon to his face I dared,  
The only man he had not scared ;  
And nothing now amuses me  
So well as these lads that I see.  
Yes, I have found no greater joys  
Than thus to watch these playful boys.  
I've view'd America and Rome,  
Yet I do love this scene at home ;  
I've seen Jerusalem and Greece,

To tell all, I should never cease ;  
But this gay pastime on the gravel  
Amuses more than still to travel.  
Give me this drawing on the sand,  
And I'll forget all honours grand.  
Yes, I have found no greater joys  
Than thus to watch these playful boys.  
"The greatest good for mortals," cries  
Pindar, though soaring to the skies,  
"Is that of which the charm can be  
Unceasingly renew'd, and free  
For their enjoyment day by day."  
This is the whole my song would say,  
Which needs no analytic style,  
As if myself I sung the while,  
Like certain poets with shut eyes  
To bring forth what within them lies,  
Making imagination all—  
Things seen vulgarity to call.  
Nor do I know exactly why  
Themes must be lofty as the sky ;  
For though stern Æschylus will soar,  
Euripides may please us more,  
At least for moments some one day,  
When we would praise people or play,  
Having a sympathetic breast  
To think each one we see is best.

I lately went to see a friend,  
With whom I would an evening spend.


The time and progress would be short ;  
And there I could have quiet sport.  
He has a house with gardens fair  
Just out of town in wholesome air,  
As being on a rising ground  
Where you see hills and woods around,  
And, best of all, the setting sun  
After the darkness has begun  
For the whole purple plain below,  
Which makes more bright the crimson glow.  
'Tis pleasant to shift air and place,  
Thought I, as in the present case,  
To dream of hay-cocks or see wheat,  
And hark to little birds so sweet.  
My friend an artist is and one  
Whose fame both far and wide has gone  
As having made his canvas show  
The fairest forms that faith can know.  
Unlike some painters of our day  
He makes all noble by the way  
With which he represents each thing  
As highest poets often sing,  
Like them with power to create  
Whereby they both alike are great ;  
Although some figures, he complains,  
Do scarcely suit our human strains.  
But where 'tis strictly Christian ground,  
What art can do, with him is found.  
Just ask, to prove him right or wrong,  
The Moses of Chateaubriand.

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But with such points I've no concern,  
I'm come here not to teach, but learn ;  
Or rather what more suits my whim,  
To pass a pleasant hour with him,  
To make him laugh, perhaps, at rhymes  
(His house is even call'd " The Chimes "),  
For here I'm sure of a reception  
Like what we read of,—no deception ;  
As Fontanes would Joubert greet,  
Here I can have a welcome sweet,  
Handle his brushes, see him paint,  
Yet not elicit a complaint,  
Then draw him to the open air,  
For art must yield to what is there,  
And there to hear him talk at ease  
More than to see him paint will please.  
But this time stars were not propitious,  
Though don't suppose I'm superstitious,  
To speak as if I thought that they  
Were sinisterous to spoil my day ;  
But the plain fact was simply this,  
That I thought somewhat was amiss,  
Which made a visit for the nonce  
A thing to be cut short at once,  
And that my boldness thither straying,  
Would be sheer impudence in staying,  
A thing he would be rid of there  
Though looks still wore a cordial air.  
How soon the least thing can unfit  
A stranger who may notice it

For keeping up a conversation  
Whatever was the expectation !  
So shortly it appear'd quite plain  
'Twas not the right thing to remain.  
A sharp eye before long detects  
What he with whom you talk expects.  
It was impossible you see  
To make our plans at all agree ;  
I for his garden bench was bound,  
He in the city must be found,  
Or in some academic walk,  
Where artists meet for private talk.  
'Tis thus whatever way one wends,  
On accidents the whole depends.  
'Twere well to learn there is but One  
Who from us never need be gone,  
Merry or grave still at our side  
Best Friend to us through time and tide.

My fine scheme for the afternoon  
Had thus to be relinquish'd soon ;  
So, though with looks of full content,  
I from his house and garden went,  
Yet somewhat at a loss, perplex'd,—  
Still with my friend by no means vex'd.  
No doubt I would have done the same,  
So how could I another blame ?  
For who is always ready thus  
To chat with one who visits us ?  
The triflers who will knock at doors



Were known to *Æschylus* as bores ;  
And the sage Greeks knew how to blame  
Those who would haunt them without shame.  
Although I think that hardly they  
Would use some manners of our day,  
In London where if rank be great  
'Twill need no doubt to guard its gate  
Against battalions arm'd with wit,  
That otherwise would visit it,  
Merely perhaps to show respect,  
Meeting with what they won't expect,  
When he who bears within their name  
Brings word as if 'twere all the same,  
Not that it is then, "Not at home,"  
An ancient way to bid them roam,  
Which being general for all  
Will not the sensitive appal,  
But as if then to plain truth given,  
And caring to please none but Heaven,  
That it is for the time "engaged,"  
With which their mind must be assuaged,  
Though hearing that their visit there  
Is what their visitee can spare,  
Who does not deem it worth his while  
To use towards them a courteous style,  
Their genus, species, rememb'ring  
As having seen, or what's resembling.  
Such a high-handed measure here  
Was not what any one could fear.  
Ice used as a repellent we

Cannot expect just now to see,  
Who to find coldness so high bred  
To other doorways should be sped,  
Where it descends as sharp and rude  
As if in Grindlewald you stood.

But how discursive I am grown,  
Or rather have been long I own ;  
Though as a contrast I opine  
Thoughts of such glaciers will make shine  
The hot sun brighter on our ground  
Where as a rule they're never found.

Well to my fate was I resign'd,  
While troubled somewhat in my mind,  
By having all my plans upset  
With nothing new arranged as yet.  
Nor was it strange I should repine,  
Though never thinking there to dine,  
For that was not what I expected,  
Like one who victuals most respected—  
Your gross-jaw'd rogue who would despise  
What slender-chops would always prize,  
Such as fruit, custards, tarts, and cream,  
Of which it is content to dream ;  
'Twas sad because I could not stay  
On fairy ground as I might say,  
Where art and genius were combined  
With that enthusiastic mind,  
Which always can find just the word

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To gratify when it is heard,  
Those who long elsewhere have grown dull,  
As exiles from the beautiful,  
Inured to suffer cold disdain,  
With not e'en spirits to complain.  
Though if to them some friends seem rough  
They should think simple truth enough,  
And not be always so intent  
On having great encouragement.  
All that was left me was to hope  
That by myself I might not mope,  
But find some other kind of play  
For the remainder of the day,  
Still in the country some vagary,  
Though just then in a rare quandary.  
And so I did on that occasion  
Which yields me now a short narration.  
An instant I stopp'd short to think ;  
I'd settled all ere you could wink ;  
I said I am not quite bereft,  
The sun at least to me is left ;  
Later there's transport for me yet  
To watch how 'midst these clouds he'll set ;  
With him then I need not despond  
The sky's eternal vagabond.  
Science of course will scout the word ;  
I care not what it calls absurd.  
The spot to me familiar grown  
Has close by claims too of its own.  
Just where the town with all its noise

Perforce must yield to rural joys,  
Where streets and omnibuses end,  
And paths through fields o'er slopes will bend ;  
Where you can tumble on the grass,  
Or words exchange with those who pass.  
In short, where country scenes begin,  
And London ceases with its din,  
Though more attractive by the way  
In which it courts the bright sun's ray,  
Cheerful far off by what it yields—  
A city scatter'd in the fields.

The thought of leaving here at once  
Of course was irksome for the nonce.  
Besides, what should I find at home,  
Where each soul was gone out to roam ?  
So rather than descend the hill,  
I thought I would walk farther still,  
When at a turn of the road,  
And bordering my friend's abode,  
I mark'd a sunny tuft of ground  
Where seated I was quickly found,  
Eyed by his white doves perching, cooing,  
As if me back to him now wooing.  
But no step I'll take retrograde,  
Whate'er reflections may be made.  
As for my failure, what care I ?  
Here is the grass, the hill, the sky.  
Farewell, thou musty, dusty town,  
Rusty, fusty ; I'll sit down.

Diminutives with us are few,  
But some that are in French I knew.  
So said I, since it is not wet,  
I'll rest here on the green *herbette*,  
A very pretty word I thought,  
For just the spot that I had sought.  
Small things were here inviting so,  
That farther I refused to go,  
Resolving to enjoy the spot,  
Though in a garden I was not ;  
But then the sun will shine as warm  
Or clouds display as grand a form,  
When you are seated o'er the ditch  
As in the parterres of the rich.  
Here are small fields as fresh and green  
As those that miles away are seen,  
With dark old trees and branches low  
As in the real country grow.  
But things here wield a charm unknown,  
Where rustics have it all their own ;  
For so near town they yield surprise,  
And truly fascinate the eyes,  
As if suburban maidens here  
Can play like shepherdesses near,  
If we could only guess the hour  
When they will trip forth from their bower  
To sit them down 'midst cowslips there,  
To scent the fields and fragrant air.  
Whereas in rural shires far off,  
At shepherdesses you might scoff,

And wonder how they cross'd your mind,  
No loved one there that you could find.  
If here I now but stopp'd to see,  
Who knows what soon there may not be ?  
No shepherd's pipe, indeed, will sound,  
Or aught that Virgil sings be found,  
Nor scrip, nor tar box, nor a hook,  
Nor happy swains beside a brook.  
But 'twill be pleasant when you think  
(Just not to let your spirits sink),  
There will be country chimneys near,  
Where once lived some one that was dear.  
Whose gate you would with interest pass,  
Though now they're gone away, alas !  
At all events this spot was such  
That it could gratify one much,  
And prompt a bard like me to sing  
Some very "little, chosen" thing,  
Idyll or Eclogue it will be,  
If you heed etymology.  
Here I could see, and feel, and rest,  
And find that watching things was best,  
Just as they pass upon the road,  
And I pursue my custom'd mode,  
Wanting in judgment, if you will,  
But not in things much better still.  
"Can aught the judgment's worth outweigh ?"  
"Yes," replies Joubert, "some things may—  
The gift of sight, The eye of mind,  
The instinct that can always find

With penetration prompt and true,  
What's good in all that passes you,  
That natural sagacity,  
Amounting to audacity,  
Which can some virtue quick discover  
In the slight faults e'en of another."  
But this is philosophic ground ;  
I leave it just to look around.  
And then by me 'tis quickly seen,  
There's nothing like a common green,  
"The sod fortuitous," so call'd  
By Horace, not in gardens wall'd,  
Where after all you must depend  
Upon the projects of your friend ;  
While here you feel as free as air,  
Consorting with chance comers there ;  
And bramble hedges seem as fine  
As e'en his shades of Eglantine.  
By observation 'tis we get  
All that we have, and don't forget.  
In brief, I came to think most sweet  
The unregarded way-side seat,  
Out of the noise to soothe your ear,  
And what youth says to comrades hear,  
Playing a fit of mirth together,  
With hearts as light as any feather ;  
For lads to one another say  
Bright things to suit a summer's day ;  
A good conceit is often theirs,  
Which a right stamp of judgment wears,

The saints in Heaven when boys have chat  
Will never knit their brows at that.  
For observation 'tis the place,  
If characters you like to trace,  
In all their tramlings to and fro,  
While following their object so,  
Whether they run or ride, or walk,  
Or to themselves while pacing talk,  
Yielding a picture such as art  
In ancient times had much at heart,  
As when it painted girls and boys,  
While here on earth so full of joys,  
That the same lips and eyes would do  
In Paradise, and grace it too.  
Recalling what in church is sung  
Of those 'midst whom you are among,  
Just passing as they pass at "Lauds,"  
And an interior voice applauds,  
"Young men and maidens and the rest,  
With juniors, aged men," and all blest,  
Each thing in strict accordance pure  
With what in mankind must endure,  
But with a difference I own,  
As in all passing can be shown ;  
For this is a transition state,  
Which all such border-lands create.  
Whatever people pass you there,  
There's something in the very air,  
Which as breathed thus is only found  
Where rural meets the city ground,

A difference, you know not what,  
That strikes you coming to this spot,  
Between the country and the town,  
The latter near, just lower down,  
While city things must here give way  
To what the country has to say,  
And country things assume an air  
Which you have never met with there,  
All delicately skinn'd and limb'd,  
Some summer dust yet neatly trimm'd.  
'Tis neither one nor other yet,  
As town or country won't forget,  
Although from me this mixture quaint  
Would never draw forth a complaint ;  
Since both can please me by the way  
They differ from what I see each day ;  
The country lass's scarlet cloak  
Will no one hot from town provoke,  
While the smart lad you may be sure  
Will look not like a rustic boor ;  
Although in both there may be seen  
A something that's half way between.  
The one, though country born and bred,  
Wears something smart upon her head,  
The other, with his 'prentice airs,  
And though he neither gapes nor swears,  
Has amidst all his gay pretence  
A dash of rural innocence.  
Both like a double figure seem  
A kind of merry, pleasant dream,

Though on the spot you may resolve  
To watch and no hard problem solve.  
Such groups thus scatter'd here and there  
Proclaim these changes in the air,  
Which on such roads await you will,  
Though you but walk up Hampstead Hill.  
A real cockney or a lout  
Would soon be sure to find them out,  
The one, because she knew no better,  
Poor soul, in whate'er street he met her,  
The other as gone half astray,  
And conscious of his truant sway,  
Who would across the country strike,  
To see just what the fields are like.  
Both are more pleasing to my view,  
Denoting much to them was new ;  
For nothing sets off more a face  
Than when some diffidence you trace,  
As most evince when not at home  
Exactly, knowing that they roam ;  
And here 'tis evident that both  
To own they're strangers won't be loth ;  
Though not like sentimental things  
Of which a far-famed Poet sings,  
They please you by the mirthful eye  
With which they ride or saunter by.  
Yea, truly the suburban Muse,  
What looks most common e'en will choose.  
If you would make such observations,  
You ought to take some road-side stations ;



And choose yours towards the north of town,  
Where suburbs suddenly drop down,  
As if almost they were afraid  
To venture near the dark wood shade,  
As in this district you perceive,  
Abruptly so the town you leave,  
To find yourself upon a green  
With no surrounding houses seen.  
And then too there's a classic tone  
Which such localities will own ;  
Horatian scenery seems here  
Recall'd by the Hill district near,  
As if the Sabine farm could be  
Traced with the groves of Tivoli,  
The modest villas, so refined,  
Where city elegance you find  
Refresh'd with that pure Sabine air,  
When frugal manners were so fair.  
This blending of the two pleased much ;  
Horatian poetry is such ;  
And both these influences might  
Be represented to the sight  
By some who here would pass along  
To furnish matter for my song ;  
Though I must own o'er road and stiles  
Pass'd chiefly London juveniles,  
Not Lambs and Johnsons to praise town,  
But on the green hill to roll down,  
Reaping the sweetness of the fields,  
And what the road suburban yields,

Who nought about Mæcenæ knew ;  
Yet still I thought that they would do  
To represent what poets like,  
Slight figures that can fancy strike ;  
Mere Harrys, Johns, and Bobs and Bills,  
Frugal as could be any hills  
In the best days of ancient Rome,  
To whom a garret serves for home,  
For pompous Baths, the Hampshire Pond,  
And yet of whom perhaps are fond  
Some hearts in lands of mystery,  
Of which the loves we can't yet see,  
Where all will one day so appear  
As to their great Creator dear,  
Light pleasures even no alloy  
But part of universal joy ;  
And that which now is thought to soil  
Will nothing hinder, nothing spoil,  
Each private to himself the while,  
Or one who thinks in noblest style  
Of love in which she feels so blest  
That each fresh thought you'd say were best.  
That world unseen surrounds us now,  
Without our understanding how.  
It is a world that lasts above  
In which reign beauty, truth, and love,  
Whate'er proud dames or tradesmen say  
Respecting low-life in our day.  
A theatre perhaps can't show  
More varied actors passing so ;

And such this green couch proved to be  
By things which live in memory.

We need not frown upon the road,  
As if to sing a lofty ode ;  
Although the ancient Roman satire  
Would find for observation matter ;  
And even this needs preparation,  
So let us profit by occasion.  
Furor poeticus we need,  
Then let him come to us with speed.  
Let's throw our arms about to raise  
Some passion that will dictate lays.  
" Whom shall I sing ? " as Pindar cries,  
The first who comes before my eyes ;  
A hero he shall be for me,  
Although a man or boy for thee.  
Here can be open'd Nature's school ;  
To see and feel the only rule ;  
Whate'er new-fangled " Boards " may say  
To keep all juveniles from play.  
Let but the Graces beauty throw  
On those who pass, however low,  
And if our flight should not be high,  
Fair will be some who ramble by,  
Who need not be afraid to find  
A poet with congenial mind,  
As when to figure in an ode  
Was thought great evil to forebode.  
No Nemesis attends such glory

When each is heard of in my story,  
While I contented sit alone  
Upon my humble verdant throne,  
Ambitious of no iron chair  
For having sung what passes there,  
The horse or lad or sempstress gay,  
Nothing forgotten in my lay,  
Which if not all throughout sublime,  
Accords more strictly with our time.  
So leaving Pindar hence to soar  
Mine be the beaten road—no more,  
Where pretty things we're sure to see  
Bright sparkles of humanity,  
More pleasing as a contrast strange  
To dull things that beside them range.

Life has its views we nauseate  
And charms we feel intensely great,  
More found upon the common road  
Than where what's envied has abode.

The first who pass'd would hasten on,  
As sore impatient to be gone ;  
A world of business in his head,  
So onward he was quickly sped.  
Whatever might have been my whim,  
"I can't," thought I, "make much of him."  
What object then was in his view  
Of course I neither cared nor knew.  
No doubt, as with the rest of us,  
There was no need for so much fuss ;

For though time flies, our projects might  
Be all accomplish'd without flight.  
Whether we toy with things or speed,  
He won't fly slower for our need.  
The least soft feather from his wing  
We cannot pluck for anything.

Then warbling to herself, strolls by  
A little maiden arch and shy,  
Who never dreamt that she was spied  
By one who sat so near her side.  
A hedge-bird poet for the nonce  
Will ne'er forget what he saw once ;  
Her air of innocence so bright  
Gave pleasure to the mental sight,  
As skipping on with gestures grave  
Of happiness she seem'd to rave,  
A vision for those ancient bowers  
When fairies lurk'd amidst the flowers.  
Those who look on see always more  
Than those who play, said bards of yore.  
But old times were not in my mind  
When often such sweet themes we find ;  
Nor dames nor knights in such a spot  
I thought would pass, but just a lot  
Of those who on a road will be  
Least versed in themes of chivalry,  
Ready to chat or play or shout,  
Or mark and turn themselves about.  
None like the 'prentice who would play

“ A Grocer-Errant ” on his way  
Flinging aside his apron blue,  
Saying, a knight he would prove true,  
Who would a heath a desert call,  
Each horse a palfrey, wenches all  
Sweet ladies fair, damsels distress'd,  
However gay they might be dress'd.  
Though lads now are not thus inspired,  
Their courteous air may be admired.  
Yes let these Ralphs now understand  
No one expects they should be grand ;  
But let them, as they pass along,  
Hold up their heads, and sing their song ;  
For he or she who owns that voice  
Can somehow make us all rejoice.  
Clean action such and good delivery  
Will need no ancient knighthood's livery.  
On horseback quite at home and bold,  
Wearing a spur, though not of gold.  
All women, sure to side with them  
If any one their style condemn,  
May take a liking to them there,  
Though venture on a smile not dare.  
And yet in truth, on such a day  
The whole of nature seems at play.  
There's nothing wanting in the spot,  
Yielding what you have ne'er forgot ;  
You'll find the lads would no one vex,  
You've cordials in the other sex ;  
What's modern will therefore do,

And so it proved and shortly too.  
Then came a cart with damsels gay  
As having spent "a happy day"—  
Fair girls, as proper in each point  
As wheels ere jumbled out of joint.  
The boy who drove look'd oft behind  
Their fun more than his horse to mind ;  
Though him, pert sauce-box, they would tease  
While strangers on the road they'd please ;  
So smiling on me, with a song  
Sirenical they pass'd along,  
Their joyous hearts so tuned to glee,  
With some of it they'd favour me,  
Not like poor Petrarch's Laura prim,  
Who scarcely deign'd to notice him.  
They would have offer'd me a lift,  
Had they but known what was my drift.  
But all the same they're here set down  
Laughing and jolting on to town.

Then on the road was heard the trot  
Of hoofs approaching to the spot,  
And making such an awful clatter  
You'd think some grave thing was the matter ;  
Such as made Obadiah speed,  
Though now for haste there's no such need,  
As I soon saw to stop my guesses  
About the cause of such expresses,  
When down the hill rode fast a lad  
Who on his arm a basket had,

A kind of youth met with at times,  
And apt to figure in my rhymes,  
For the sole reason that they gave  
A contrast to the over-grave,  
Not only by their bright blue dress  
But by their smart way of address,  
Which seem'd to sparkle with some wit  
And cheerfulness to bring with it,  
From being waggishly inclined,  
As most are with a youthful mind ;  
Wanting, perhaps in education,  
With no great fund of conversation,  
Whose private governors had nought  
Developed in their way of thought,  
There still was somewhat in their air  
Which look'd like what was open, fair.  
'Twas almost laughable to see  
How secretly they'd all agree  
In thinking they should never ride  
Without what yields a certain pride.  
Though why, I know not, if you ask it,  
Save as a contrast to their basket.  
They'd have their fashion like the rest,  
Which seem'd to them of course the best.  
I liked them for their sports and mirth,  
Which to variety gave birth.  
E'en for their measures with their nag  
Of forty shillings when he'd lag.  
In each you could an honest face  
And somewhat near a good one trace.



If to such heroes you object,  
My plea is I can none reject.  
'Tis not my fault if they do wrong,  
Or what may sound such in my song ;  
Although if you saw nothing worse,  
They'd seem a credit to their nurse.  
Besides, it does one good to look on  
Those who have not had much affliction.  
I think to you it must be clear  
That I've invented nothing here,  
But that all pass'd just as I say  
Before my eyes that very day.  
Though anecdotes are great and small,  
You'll shake the credit of them all  
If you pretend that what I sing  
Does not describe the real thing.

Still now, supposing all be true,  
Why tell it? I hear said by you.  
We ought in every narration  
To please but men of information ;  
Whereas I often give details  
In which low common life prevails.  
It may be so, of course, I say,  
When thus as if come out for play.  
I know as well as you, perhaps,  
Wise things ; but no one always "*saps* "  
(If you will not pronounce absurd  
This excellent Etonian word).  
'Tis a mistake to think that some

To look down on their own can't come,  
Because like me they would be merry,  
Yes, and in spite of grim sneers, very.  
Now if their secret must not sleep,  
Mirth in their memory they'd keep.  
And though what's clever they admire,  
Of brilliant praised things they will tire,  
Reserving for their sport at times  
What others may call foolish rhymes.  
I do not say they'd haunt the gutter ;  
But very homely things they'd utter ;  
Just as a youngster flies from pomp  
With playmates of his choice to romp,  
Not caring, as we say, "a straw,"  
For the conclusions others draw.  
Lucretius may be vastly fine,  
And Lucan in another line ;  
But metaphysics are not fun,  
Nor war-songs either when all's done.  
And cheerful moments spent with ease  
Can often move them more and please ;  
Though the sole heroes that they see  
Are errand lads to loiter free,  
When some arch-genius is employ'd  
And thoroughly by them enjoy'd.  
Cæsar recalls historic truth,  
But some like better London youth.  
In this bright world the slightest thing  
Is big with jest that one may sing.  
Ay, and as Tristram's father said,

Has in it lessons for the head,  
If only we can find it out,  
Which is the search that we're about.  
So some, when they'd recall the past,  
Prefer that these choice scenes should last,  
Which are not always grave or merry,  
But what's between both, pleasing very,  
Producing a half-serious air  
Which gentle frolic likes to wear,  
And leaving for their memory still  
What the same purpose can fulfil,  
Deeming coarse laughter idiotic,  
And for its fancy an exotic,  
Resolved to read when quite alone  
No other book there but its own,  
Not quite Pindaric, nor yet bad ;  
But now return we to our lad,  
Whose triumphs which you need not spell,  
I must now make a shift to tell.  
The sunny way down which he rode  
Might once have been a turnpike road ;  
But now there was no crowd or noise,  
But what was caused by such small boys,  
While on each side the fields extended,  
And by no ditch or hedge defended,  
'Tis beaten but by common feet ;  
For here no courtiers I shall meet ;  
So with all fears I can dispense,  
And airs that savour of pretence.  
Besides, behind a bush lay I,

Which screen'd me from the public eye.  
He drew his rein as he came near,  
Intent on somewhat it was clear;  
For, seeing no one at the place,  
He thought that he would slack his pace  
And show himself to his own eyes,  
As one who with the bravest vies,  
Making his roadster understand  
Whatever thing he might command;  
So of a sudden he must see  
Some proof of great docility.  
"Nobody's coming," said he, "by,"  
So how to manage him he'd try,  
Just a thought harder each time striking,  
What was not to his charger's liking.  
Well, I suppose, are just the same  
Many who'd understand the game.  
"A certain levity is found  
In natures excellent and sound;"  
'Tis Joubert says it; so don't frown,  
Or seek at once to cry us down.  
And as for this lad, who could say  
What in his memory might stay?  
Perhaps he'd heard some girl declaring,  
She liked not those who were too sparing  
Of what they wore upon their heel,  
As if they did not courage feel;  
Such as I heard once too complain  
Of canting language, rubbish vain;  
"Which makes," said she, "the fancy dull,

Leaving it nothing smart to cull."  
The Parce, Puer, stimulus  
Would sound nonsensical to this.  
If others censured, she would say,  
I only laugh to see their way.  
In all such nice and squeamish voices  
Her silent judgment ne'er rejoices ;  
She liked to watch whate'er was done,  
What struck her as but so much fun ;  
She liked to see the ears thrown back,  
And eye suspicious of the back :  
She liked to see him swerving round,  
Then rearing upright from the ground.  
To frisk, jump, bound, kick—all seem'd sport,  
And most the kicks both long and short ;  
Whatever made so wild the filly,  
She cared not, nor would think it silly.  
" 'Tis stupid," she would say, " to blame  
Things that are wanted all the same ;  
And if they were not wanted thus,  
Would not the master make a fuss ?  
Or of their boy his wife complain,  
Who let's him so be off again,  
Though she must know, at least suspect,  
The thing which he will soon effect.  
For with him daily in the shop,  
Where both together often stop,  
She needs must see, and think quite right  
What he will use when out of sight.  
Her errands must be done with speed,

So let him have what he will need.  
For all this, though a little rough,  
The young man may do well enough."  
The lad might have remember'd such,  
Who said she would not mind it much,  
Nor take off spurs (her you might trust),  
"Till they had done their duty first."  
A smarter *quip* could not be heard—  
A bitter sense in a sweet word—  
One of those expressions due  
To instinct finding uses new.  
For terms that so transferr'd will please  
As daring with an air of ease,  
What some are charged with to admit,  
As if those blamed might boast of it.  
Words misapplied, then, if you will,  
But with a clear, arch meaning still :  
Original they may 'be call'd,  
As having Fancy's self forestall'd,  
And quaint, for what can say so well,  
Things these are half ashamed to tell ?  
There are such language coiners witty,  
Arch damsels with no morbid pity ;  
Meaning in general approval  
No wish for any thing's removal—  
Perhaps most found, I know not why,  
Where semi-rural lads ride by  
Thus every morning all intent  
On reaching doors to which they're sent,  
Unless it is that in such streets

The fancy colours what one meets ;  
As leisure leaves people more free,  
To slack their pace some thing to see,  
With no one near them that they dread,  
Who'd watch each time they turn their head.  
To sing a canto whole, entire,  
About such damsels on my lyre  
Would look as if I meant to try  
With famed biographers to vie,  
Like him who with his harmless chaff  
Has made some centuries to laugh ;  
But I glance only now and then  
At what should not displease the men.  
The mirthful creatures whom I mention,  
Who truly merit some attention,  
As having wit at their command,  
When seeing what they understand,  
From yards or attics fix their eye  
On what can please when passing by,  
Their chin still resting on the broom,  
With which they have just swept the room.  
For ladies' implements are not  
The things exactly they have got ;  
Though, if you end these with "a fan,"  
Finish your couplet they all can,  
With their own—you know—valued more  
Than laquais or a coach and four ;  
And justly valued perhaps, too,  
Whatever you may think to do.  
So living in the constant sphere

Of all humanity that's dear,  
Although they may not often speak  
Perfect Arcadia, if you seek  
Lips that distil what's truly sweet,  
The rare quintessence of conceit,  
Their apprehensions are not dull  
To make what's common beautiful.  
Of things at times they'll archly tell  
In terms that some can relish well.  
These accidental classics use,  
Expressions that can much amuse,  
Incomparably skill'd with grace,  
To say things witty to your face ;  
Or to describe what others do,  
Until you would be like them too.  
For as their wit will have its fling,  
They care not who may do the thing ;  
Though all the while they have an air  
Which speaks them good as well as fair :  
Even more modest than the grave,  
Who would appearances most save.  
Those who of such things make a jest,  
Least shy are often much the best.  
Perhaps some words thus quaint and gay  
Had over him a sudden sway ;  
And since he thinks there's no one near,  
What's liked must do its duty here.  
'Tis plain he thinks of this sport much,  
And greatly likes to give a touch,  
Mechanically though applied,



With oscillations on the side ;  
As when, but riding on a gate  
His boot-heel blows would give their weight ;  
So surely will his horse incur  
What was approved of so by her.  
Besides, since his bold grey would start,  
'Twas only right that it should smart.  
So pleased he seem'd at such sly play,  
It look'd as if he meant to stay.  
The solitude that reign'd around  
Seem'd then to furnish just the ground  
For doing what that girl admired,  
With whose words he might feel inspired,  
For surely in the lowly bred  
Some chivalry can oft be read,  
As whilom in the silly page  
Who would forestall his knightly age.  
At least he'd make the horse repent  
For having had such an intent ;  
Though him of course he did not chide  
That he more quietly might ride.  
For thus to sit well and be taught  
Was just the very thing he sought ;  
And did not he look pleased to see  
Each time the horse kick'd furiously,  
Although you'd say the horse as yet  
Was willing all this to forget ;  
But e'en his patience had an end  
While equine courage would not bend.  
When with the curb held very tight

He served him as he thought was right,  
Till (what an air of interest had)  
The horse tried hard to throw the lad ;  
But then his rider had recourse  
To what look'd more like open force.  
'Twas not sly pressure he'd conceal,  
But blows repeated of his heel,  
As hard as ever he could hit  
With no one to find fault with it ;  
All measures thenceforth justified  
To warrant quite a proper pride,  
Even in her had she been there  
To laugh, admire it and stare.  
He used at last a shrewder mode,  
Which skill and practice at least show'd,  
Which rivall'd Tripet's feat of old,  
As was in Yorick's volume told ;  
So standing in the stirrups high,  
Till under him you'd see the sky,  
The weight of his whole body fell  
Just where he wanted it to tell,  
When this strict duty was fulfill'd  
As the said damsel would have will'd.  
The vicious nag wheel'd round and round,  
And still the same instruction found ;  
With sudden plunge he'd swerve aside,  
When paid so well for having shied.  
His rider deeming all this fair,  
Might think his riding past compare,  
Though sooth perhaps his chief concern

Was that the horse should manners learn ;  
Since stopping, starting, swerving so,  
Of course should not unnoticed go.  
At length as if he'd had enough,  
And thought he'd used him rather rough,  
He jump'd down on the road to see  
What signs of all he'd done might be :  
Then, with a face opposed to mirth,  
He seem'd examining the girth,  
As if it was beneath his pride  
To notice aught else on the side ;  
Though somewhat there to leave he'd meant,  
What else could have been his intent ?  
So that e'en yards off where I sat  
I saw there lots of proofs of that.  
Then while the horse would quiet stand  
The lad scraped dust up with his hand,  
With which he rubb'd down the whole place  
As wanting something to efface,  
That what he'd done might not be seen,  
Though it would never give the spleen.  
And yet though he had look'd severe  
This rider loved his horse 'twas clear.  
His face he stroked, his neck caress'd,  
He used pet words that could attest  
The passion that he felt once o'er  
He loved him better than before.  
'Twas not severity in him,  
'Twas to be daring just a whim,  
Whatever caused it, for I own

I've sung the probable alone.  
In fact boys play thus with each other  
While loving each as would his mother.  
An aged French Abbé said to me,  
"These English lads are strange to see ;  
They so ill-treat their fondest friends,  
While still their friendship never ends !"  
Therefore we need not wonder much  
If playing with a horse be such,  
As I just witness'd in this lad,  
Who sought to make his playmate mad.  
Then snatching his basket from the road,  
Mounting again, away he rode,  
Giving me too a friendly smile  
That said, you saw me all the while,  
Surprised at first, but not less gay,  
Whatever any one might say.  
He had not thought that I was near,  
But all the same, 'twas pretty clear  
He did not feel the least remorse  
For having play'd so with the horse.  
And by his nod he seem'd to say  
You'd do the same another day.

Nought noble in all this or grand,  
But we can't incidents command ;  
They're rank and rampant weeds I own,  
But on the wayside they were grown.  
Gather'd indeed without much toil,  
They show the nature of the soil ;

While they must needs attract the eye  
Of those thus sitting careless by,  
And though you think them rather coarse,  
In cheap things some find a resource,  
As we can witness every day,  
When before print-shops people stay.


Then comes a walking trouble next,  
With various matters seeming vex'd.  
A tall, grave man in black is he,  
Whose face denotes great misery.  
He neither whistles nor yet sings,  
But like one of those bookish things,  
You'd think that he must bear the weight  
Of the chief troubles of the state,  
Or that all horrors of the past  
Within his mind would ever last,  
Or that he thought of Zoroaster,  
As if of him he would be master,  
The origin of evil tracing,  
And Arimanus quite effacing,  
Though not to Oromazus he  
Would give a complete victory,  
His poor head stuff'd with Eastern lore,  
Though only sad and puzzled more,  
Impassion'd no doubt, ever zealous,  
And knowing all about Ocellus.  
A reading man's determined walk  
Was his while pacing fast he'd talk—  
One who would always have his way

And mind not much what others say ;  
Perhaps he'd find some deadly fault  
In wisest men of whom he thought,  
Holding up his prophetic nose,  
Divining still where'er he goes.  
It was some author who thus strode  
For health on our suburban road.  
Well, 'twas a contrast, I must say,  
To what had just then pass'd away ;  
Nor did I feel at once quite sure  
That I should like more the demure,  
Who'd cordially despise the lad  
That was not either vex'd or sad.  
I would his merry heart had he,  
And somewhat less solemnity.  
But still let gravity pass on,  
It has its worth when all are gone.  
Who knows ? perhaps as thus it walks,  
And to itself so grimly talks,  
Wrapp'd up in grief on themes of woe,  
As if it thought all should be so,  
It may by fields and stiles be won  
To ope its inside to the sun,  
Lay by its foolish study there,  
Giving its brains a change of air,  
And come thus to resemble more  
Those who have pass'd us just before,  
A glance at whom suffices here  
To make him laughable appear.  
Such gravities of course condemn

All who are not the same as them.  
Remarkable they are for spite,  
More than for being always right.  
So we retort and fancy too  
That our impressions are more true  
When such young people pass along,  
And we find nothing deadly wrong,  
And half the seriousness one sees  
Turns nonsense at the sight of these.

Then drawing a great truck came down  
Two lads proceeding to the town ;  
But as intent on having chat,  
They stopp'd short there, and down they sat.  
Some under-age loud protestation  
Was their amusement at that station,  
Till one of them his foot made bare  
To see what had annoy'd him there,  
At times a complimentary youth,  
At others somewhat thus uncouth.  
Yet having but to wash his face,  
And shift socks to meet any case.  
Some sage Rubenius, living later,  
Might wish, perhaps, from the narrator  
A statement of the kind of shoe  
Which at that moment came to view,  
On what thongs, lachets, jaggs, and ends,  
The youth unlacing labour spends.  
But as I always hasten thus  
It will be quite enough for us

To mark how one not soon abash'd  
Appear'd to feel his boldness dash'd,  
When seeing me so suddenly  
He look'd down struck a little shy,  
As if he thought that I would laugh,  
And wants of dealbation chaff.  
We have not the Enchanter's sense  
To know by its tread Innocence.  
"The pace of some chaste footing" near  
To us can never be so clear ;  
Still less, like witches, by our thumbs  
Feel we that something wicked comes.  
Enough for us from this green seat  
To think well of the dusty feet  
Of those who have at times to stop  
And gravel from their boot let drop,  
While half ashamed if any see  
What in it there may wanting be,  
At least if they by chance should find  
Some one thus seated close behind.  
The blood will to youth's cheek so rush  
That for a trifle it will blush ;  
So that on such a high road thus  
Can bashfulness be traced by us,  
If only with an artist's skill,  
We mark its rosy presence still,  
Which seem'd to Pythias so fair  
That no tint could with it compare,  
When in a simple, manly face,  
This special colour she could trace.





If Aristotle's daughter had  
 Been here, she would have liked the lad ;  
 Though all the rest might have been wild,  
 Bold as a stripling, still a child ;  
 Perhaps, of lad's love sample too,  
 Tuning his thoughts whate'er he'd do,  
 Though 'twas but playing on his pipe  
 For graver matters not yet ripe.

But now a band of juveniles,  
 Ready to jump o'er dykes and stiles,  
 With cricket bats intending play  
 Came to the slope on which I lay.  
 Where tempted by the first grass found,  
 They stretch'd themselves upon the ground,  
 To wait for others as was clear  
 To me who sat beside them near,  
 And thought of that old Grecian song,  
 About what must to bliss belong,  
 Which after three things said thus ends :  
 "The fourth is youth that's spent with  
 friends,"<sup>1</sup>

But the main cause of their delay,  
 Thus idling on the road to stay,  
 Appear'd to be the distant roar  
 Of thunder threatening more and more,  
 As dark clouds roll'd up from the plain  
 Where lines of streets seem'd lost in rain,

<sup>1</sup> τέταρτον ἦβῶν μετὰ τῶν φίλων.

As a white vapour rising there  
Seem'd blending them with purple air.  
My Oriental friends, thought I,  
Must have the thunder very nigh.  
With us the sun continued still  
To colour the whole sloping hill ;  
But how much longer it would stay  
Was what not one of us could say.  
A shepherd with his dog pass'd by,  
Who seem'd not much to heed the sky.  
Though I could judge as well as he,  
To him I said while passing me,  
"That we shall catch it do you think ?"  
He nodded with a knowing wink.  
The boys were too intent on chat  
To notice or consider that ;  
While still fresh comrades join them there,  
Who for such signs seem'd not to care,  
As each one threw his hot limbs down,  
Whate'er might say the passing clown.  
Then on the road still bright with sun  
The feet that will on errands run  
Were heard of one who had a pace  
That well explain'd his streaming face ;  
For hasting in an inverse way,  
As frighten'd by the frequent play  
Of lightning seen across that cloud,  
Of which no peal as yet was loud,  
A boy in telegraphic dress  
To the near town as an express,

With double motive for his speed,  
Of which he seem'd to feel the need,  
Came running down ; yet breath he had  
To shout to us, that friendly lad  
Bidding us hasten as he thought  
Some shelter soon must needs be sought.  
Then slowly rising, not to show  
They minded one they did not know,  
Who thus to speak to them had dared,  
As if forsooth they could be scared,  
Each lad appear'd inclined to say,  
" No cricketing for us to-day."  
Yet I who in the sky can read  
Had thought for haste there was no need.  
The hills of Hampstead still were free  
From sinistrous obscurity ;  
Until to my surprise I own  
Another side began to moan  
And mutter in accordance near  
With what at first had caused no fear.  
So finding ourselves thus surrounded  
The stoutest felt somewhat astounded,  
As each one snatching up his bat  
Most clearly indicated that ;  
When they and I at once began  
To try who down the swiftest ran ;  
When soon I found a friendly shed,  
The others scatter'd elsewhere sped,  
Where ends my tale, while I remain  
To watch no longer men but rain.

## CANTO IV.

## ROMANCE IN LIFE.

BUT now another charge the most opposed  
To what was lately blamed is here supposed,  
And some will say that in this wiser age  
For mere Romance to manifest a rage  
Is to be quite absurd, behind the times,  
Which must in fact disdain such idle rhymes.  
But if for what afflicts them e'en the most  
This very rage, without a wish to boast,  
Were shown to be a remedy most fit,  
Pray what would they then think or say of it?  
Well, this is what I hold can soon be shown ;  
So hear a late experience some might own.  
But give me some encouragement to sing.  
Without attention Bards can't touch a string.  
Clap your hands quickly, bid some others run,  
Lest they be late to hear the song begun :  
Stretch out both arms, then lean back in your chair,  
Shut tight your eyes, prepared to listen there.

To meet some wants we must prosaic be,  
And utter words not known to Poetry.  
As when we hear those who complain and say,  
What shall we do to pass the time away?  
Which, still in spite of efforts, proves for us  
Tedious indeed and too monotonous.  
Such sameness now belongs to common life,

We'd almost welcome e'en a sudden strife,  
Or some mischance so call'd that might inspire  
A novel subject to employ the lyre.  
But with these grumblers I can't quite agree  
Who find with us nought save monotony.  
The English woman's race indeed alone  
Has such a dulcet fresh-enduring tone  
That were there nothing more for you to trace,  
It were enough if all else you efface ;  
Though you will fear that if not left with all  
Some grief or mischief would the girls befall.  
The men are so oft wanted here or there  
I know not if there's one that they could spare.  
So you must leave the rest and feel content  
Whatever might have been your first intent.  
Some that you meet with for a moment so,  
Of whom you now and never will nought know,  
Suffice such charming guesses to supply,  
That you can never want variety.  
Guesses surpass the truth perhaps at times ;  
Though I would anger no one in my rhymes.  
They are like Painters, letting us suppose  
More than their brush on canvas plainly shows.  
I only mean that guesses such provide  
A real pleasant change for every tide.  
Who? what? whence? whither bound, I'd think  
are they ?  
Well, 'tis enough. I've seen them smile to-day.  
Besides in England there are chance-things sweet  
If there's a wish each novelty to greet

With the fresh impulse of a grateful mind  
That can interior pleasures in it find ;  
At least some former joys your memory brings,  
As if they could come back on Youth's bright wings,  
Resources always yours if harsh control  
Has not contracted and made sad the soul,  
By teaching it to see and fear some harm  
Where nature meant we should our thoughts  
disarm,

And suffer them to rest where all is peace,  
And reap the pleasures of a sweet release  
From groundless fears, as if they had a foe  
In each fond fancy which some wish to show.  
Still I admit that daily things can tire,  
And as the French say, "leave much to desire ;"  
That, too, which we in our past songs would try  
To English lads and lasses to supply.  
However for the nonce let's change the scene,  
And witness what in France was lately seen  
On one autumnal day, which though not long  
Could furnish matter for my present song.

Talk of adventures and Romance forsooth !  
But hear what one day can supply in truth  
If only you are lodged within the hold  
Where some were lately, castle huge and old ;  
But which I will not name lest you should know  
Whose is the portrait I must shortly show.  
For errant bards like me must take great care  
When trenching on some ground that they may ne'er

Appear to compromise a stranger e'en,  
And how much greater if a friend has been.  
He may expose himself to risk of blame,  
But not involve another in the shame,  
Or even in what falsely is thought such,  
The ground for caution ever is so much.  
Suffice it then to say this castle stood  
Upon the borders of a dark, vast wood,  
Or forest rather, as 'tis even call'd,  
With whose black depths you might have felt  
appall'd.

Far in the west of France it was remote  
From all access by railroad, coach, or boat ;  
For it stood inland, distant from the sea,  
Around it nought but the obscurity  
Of wild rough hamlets and a vast black moor,  
Where to meet no one you were nearly sure,  
Unless it were upon a holiday,  
When peasant women go in carts to pray  
At some old shrine or Calvary well known  
As having some attractions of its own ;  
And more than this I will not here express,  
So that I think the name you'll never guess.

But now, indeed, 'tis time that I begin ;  
So think of some one as a guest within,  
To tell of what pass'd on a single day  
While things as strange I think suppose you may  
As still occurring elsewhere in these times,  
And worth the telling in a minstrel's rhymes.

You'd say they were anachronisms sheer,  
As when a silly Painter made appear  
Great Abraham prepared to slay his son  
In sacrifice, and arm'd him with a gun ;  
Though here 'tis old things that will meet your  
eyes,

Which seen with new, can equally surprise.  
I sing of nought but what may happen still,  
Somewhere or other if we have the will  
To feel as people felt in days of old,  
Before all things had grown so stiff and cold.  
But here the incident that's met with first,  
On the sight only with great wonder burst,  
Without demanding any state of mind  
Its wild romantic character to find.  
For as a bard sat lone at dawn of day,  
Intent upon a book his custom'd way,  
He saw emerging from the bushes near  
What caused instinctively a certain fear,  
A sort of dog-like animal that ran  
As if it relish'd not the sight of man.  
His hue was brown, his thin tail swept the ground,  
His long ears upright, seem'd to catch each sound ;  
He had a restless and unquiet stare,  
As if he would not stop a moment there,  
Though he did stop and glance from side to side,  
Then canter on and in a thicket hide.  
No dog has such a conscience then, thought he,  
It must have been a wolf upon his spree,  
And such it was, said they ; for with that gait



It oft was seen to pass as near the gate.  
But what is stranger still, this wolf would fawn  
Upon the chieftain's daughter on the lawn.  
Hating the man who daily brought it food,  
'Twas only her the wild one understood ;  
And it would often leap into her arms,  
As if her beauty all his instinct charms ;  
So that if now this incident appear  
To lose its wildness these facts told us here,  
It gains more than it loses when we see  
How forest beasts thus all subdued can be,  
Moved only by the beauty of a maid,  
Themselves still free to haunt the forest shade.  
But its poetic feeling would not last ;  
The end for it, said they, is coming fast.  
For though just then it seem'd almost half tame  
Next spring they knew it would not be the same ;  
'Twas sure to finish ill as some might tell,  
Who what had elsewhere pass'd remember'd well.  
So thus, while scarcely risen was the sun,  
This day's adventures seem'd to have begun.

Then next, there's need of mental preparation  
To hear what follows in this true narration ;  
For in that Castle, grim, and huge, and hoary,  
There lives that maid of whom we've heard the  
story,  
One who brings blessings to each spot she comes  
to,  
Witty and fair, the very one to speak to,

Who with her father's guest consents to walk,  
And 'neath the green wood sit awhile to talk.  
Ah me ! no doubt the picturesque is fine,  
But not for ever can suffice that line ;  
And hours there are when no artistic eye  
Proves quite enough the mind to satisfy ;  
For draw-bridges and towers howe'er grand  
Can never secret sentiments command,  
Which to be productive and content  
Will need a tongue by which they can have vent.  
So knowing that this guest to verse was vow'd,  
She felt some chat with him might be allow'd,  
As in her simple innocence she thought  
That he would only speak just as he ought.  
So she, accustom'd to lone forest walks,  
Goes now with him, and as she rambles talks.  
Oh, Heaven on earth ! how sweet it is to stroll  
Midst young trees thus with one companion sole !  
By spring or early summer in a wood,  
The charm I'd sing of may be understood.  
The song of birds, the colours of the sky,  
The bright green leaves, the plains so blue that  
lie

Beneath the hills, as peeping through the trees,  
Whatever there one hears, or smells, or sees,  
As at Chantilly, or at Compiègne,  
Elysian scenes presenting to you then,  
Combine to grant you such a radiant bower  
You ne'er forget it, never from that hour ;  
The memory would haunt you e'en in death ;

For that alone you still would draw your breath.  
But here there was a difference, I own,  
For now September cast another tone.

At first they both began in comic style  
The time and sultry pathway to beguile,  
Till it was plain the two were quite agreed  
That there was no occasion for such speed ;  
So finding there a bank and mossy seat,  
Beneath the leaves they plunged their weary feet.  
For as the summer then was near its close,  
The fallen leaves would gather, as one knows,  
Especially in holes where they abounded,  
Which holes were with a kind of couch sur-  
rounded,  
From which far distant 'neath the forest trees,  
Interminable vistas green one sees,  
Which when you stand are hidden from the sight,  
The near leaves causing shade as dark as night ;  
But seated low all these you can look under,  
When at the far-off beauty you will wonder.

Beginning then at once 'twas very strange  
How soon through deepening themes their words  
would range.  
But such can oft most please the woman's mind,  
As even grave philosophers will find,  
To justify the high opinion shown  
By Carré, who to Fontanelle was known,  
As having deem'd that mind the very best

For finding in the gravest studies rest.  
Either from marking their docility,  
From preconceived objections being free,  
And that their wish was but to understand  
What said by others struck them as most grand,  
In rapture still attending, as if mute,  
Without the inclination to dispute,  
Or that he thought them most attach'd in youth,  
To what they heard that look'd most like the truth,  
This wise academician held that we  
Could gain great things from their philosophy.  
Thus it proved here, as he would now attest,  
For all her answers seem'd to him the best.  
Her words were music, and her thoughts profound,  
Her heart her teacher, and her reason sound.  
And yet, and yet, the damsel still was there,  
Playful and arch, incomparably fair.  
He mark'd a high aristocratic grace,  
Combined with what it sought not to efface—  
The thoughts and feelings of the humblest maid  
That ever wander'd through a greenwood shade;  
For, like the lowly, she too could be grave,  
At least for moments that occasion gave.  
She courted solid language and discourse  
That savour'd of experience in life's course,  
While hoping that on him might seem entail'd  
A judgment which had hitherto avail'd.  
Alas! how little know we of each other!  
But it is only right some things to cover.

So then encouraged by her invitation,  
The bard would speak of things in that relation.  
And while his thoughts on secret matters ran,  
'Twas thus their conversation there began :—

“ Of friendship let me hear you speak !  
Oh say if we are wrong,  
When many kinds of that we'd seek,  
Each worthy of a song ?

“ Can there be ties that differ so  
Deserving of that name ? ”  
“ Yes,” she replied, “ 'tis truth, I know,  
And none of these I'd blame.”

“ 'Tis so,” he said, “ in friendship's roll,  
Since all of us love many,  
And cannot for one standard sole,  
Be led to give up any.

“ You scarce can see a true girl's face,  
Exceptions are so few,  
In which you would not friendship trace,  
As if her mind you knew.

“ To read its sweet love-thoughts untold  
You think would yield such bliss,  
No future life could more unfold  
Than what you'd find in this.

“What must that future world then be  
When all will thus be known?  
What Heavenly society,  
Where each will be our own?”

“No doubt there can be diverse sorts  
Of friendship true,” said she,  
“And innocence itself consorts  
With those that can agree.

“Though,” she did add, he must admit,  
“You men are still so strange,  
You love simplicity and wit  
Through high and low to range.”

He knew the while, though 'twas not told,  
That friendship may be true  
For the impassion'd and the cold,  
Whatever each may do.

Friendship must have a varied way ;  
It can't one line preserve,  
With one 'twould frolic, wildly play,  
With others show reserve.

It needs in one the free and bold,  
The delicate in others,  
What pleases one cannot be told  
Where great sense feeling smothers.

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For one it would affect the cruel,  
For others fear to mention,  
What just before to sport was fuel,  
Love's capital invention.

Its style must alter with its need ;  
Some like what others blame ;  
'Twill choose the part that each will heed ;  
The friendship is the same.

She seem'd to read a secret thought ;  
She'd try not to be sure ;  
To think the best of all she sought ;  
Her mind makes each thing pure.

Then next encouraged by her earnest tone,  
He sought to hear reflections of her own,  
Respecting what he once in books had read,  
Forgetting not what was by Wordsworth said  
About the Knight, who found to his surprise  
That in a twofold chain he henceforth lies ;  
And so he told how one would pass away,  
As if resolved near others not to stay,  
Who when the night had come for her to leave  
Felt what no hope surviving could deceive—  
A grief that had a new appalling tone,  
As if to say for ever you're alone ;  
Who waited long despairing, till at last  
They thought that she from them for aye was  
pass'd ;  
Since silence absolute protracted so,

Seem'd to leave nothing more for them to know ;  
And she had left without assurance fond,  
That she to love for ever could respond.  
So they became a drift, at random cast,  
Till caught afresh they would entangle fast  
Where they yet could, although wreck'd so,  
remain,  
And no more float in solitude again ;  
When lo ! the other did come back and say,  
'Twas but her sickness caused the long delay,  
The knot of love entangled so and tied,  
That ne'er undone it could be till they died ;  
While still another innocent remain'd,  
Loved also much with no suspicion stain'd,  
Like elements the two that knew not why,  
Yet do effect rare issues, and ne'er try  
But by their operation simply still,  
To carry on in ignorance the ill.  
Nor Love nor Nature seem to set them free,  
Nor either yield them real liberty.  
The tale long grown familiar to his mind,  
And which in Poems of his own you find,  
To her he told as if in careless play,  
Intent of course to hear what she would say.  
" Must these," he ask'd, " without excuse appear  
When they found two no longer one most dear ?  
So that without dishonour they could not  
Treat one or other as by them forgot ?"  
Her words were then more rapid in reply,  
Than e'en the language of her speaking eye ;



"They should have waited longer then," she said,

"Impatience caused them to be thus misled.

But thus it is I always can descry

How few men have that virtue, Constancy !"

"But," he demanded, "if of strength bereft,

To cast off either they'd no power left,

Alas, alas ! the new Love and the old

Were both more real than could e'er be told.

Can any ray of goodness yet belong

Unto the men who thus are led to wrong ?

Or in such nets can any one find rest,

Or can they hope that they can e'er be blest ?

Placed thus," he ask'd, "say can they be forgiven ?"

"Ah ! that," she answered, "we must leave to Heaven.

But still," she added, "more is cancell'd there,

I think than some to hope for ever dare ;

I hope it all was in confession told ;

For me to say more would sound over bold.

Yet authorized I hear strange things have been,

As can on ancient sepulchres be seen.

But whether this be true or not, I say,

Treat with assurance such themes no one may."

Well, talk like this he thought was old romance,

As can be witness'd thus at times in France,

Where piety is not too proud to see

The tragic legend that in life can be.

How charming was it so to have combined,  
Such solid wisdom, and so fair a mind !  
No sanction for false sentiment, and yet  
Nothing like what in sternest books is met ;  
For circumstance allowance, at least pity,  
And that from lips not harsh from being witty,  
Guesses, it seem'd, at secret predilections,  
And yet no anger at such wild selections,  
Whole views of life, and yet with such reserve  
As would all plans of nature still preserve—  
Unlike those of a Polish Lady heard,  
Whose gravity suggested words absurd,  
As à propos of texts about our neighbour,  
She told her friend that he might spare his labour,  
For “man” was not her neighbour—could not be,  
So from such obligations she was free.  
How different the estimate of life  
Which here had sorrow for this long past strife !  
And yet it is in France he'd freely own  
That female minds least natural seem grown ;  
For so absorb'd are they in highest light,  
That what is human will yield small delight.  
As some high guest would soon monopolize  
His Host's attentions, and old friends despise,  
So Pleasure—Intellectual will play  
Its part in them, and to nought else give way.  
In points of faith these joys so please the mind  
Its partner might grow jealous, and thus find  
That he was there cut out, forgotten quite,  
Which he might think was not exactly right,

Vulgar esteem'd, unmentionable, low,  
Whom no one that's respectable should know,  
Before his fellow-guests as so ill-bred,  
Evincing manners that could ne'er be said,  
All fond attentions lavish'd on the other,  
His own suggestions with contempt to smother,  
While no one ever dreams he should complain  
Of his companion's proud, exclusive reign,  
Though him he would sincerely honour still,  
And feel for him but kindness and good-will.  
To all this then the Bard would now confess,  
The contrast pleased much more than he'd express.

Implied unwillingness for judgment here,  
For all a welcome yielded without fear,  
The high and low both entertain'd with grace,  
Whate'er in human nature one could trace,  
The fellowship admitted, thus combined,  
The Bard in this romantic joys could find.  
Link'd in her gentle thoughts all things agree  
Pleasure with Goodness her eternity ;  
Each accent musical, those whispers still,  
Seem fraught with strength of an immortal will.  
Milder than Love or Pity's self she seem'd,  
Yet still heroical most justly deem'd ;  
Goodness epitomized, yet that so great,  
'Twould swell a book in folio all to state.  
Apollo's harp ne'er tuned to such a song,  
Compared with hers would make the moments  
long ;

To audience such the longest hour would be  
A moment's glimpse of immortality ;  
As if from Time's grey glass there had not dropp'd  
The sand of many minutes while they stopp'd.

At length they rose, and found with some dismay  
That shades denoted the decline of day,  
Which play'd the thief to steal upon them so,  
Letting them nothing mark and nothing know.  
Eternal thanks, thought he, thou maid so holy,  
Whose gay, wise words can chase dull melan-  
choly.

Thou art as Poets sing, what Nature meant,  
When she created all—fears, joys, content ;  
The fears to check, the joys to point out right,  
Content to banish hopeless, groundless fright,  
As if the end were sure to prove to all  
There is no death for Love, whate'er befall.

So now soft Evening dons her gold attire,  
And he is led still more things to admire ;  
For leaving the dark woods in which they stroll'd,  
The Castle, lit with sunset rays behold—  
Colour'd on high with rose and gorgeous light,  
While lower walls seem clothed with sombre  
night.

Then of his fair companion taking leave,  
Whose smiles seem'd secret sorrows to deceive,  
He mounted winding stairs to where he lay,  
And saw the last streaks of expiring day.

Now to the scene before him pray attend,  
And to enjoy it some few moments spend.  
That turret was so high that you look'd down  
On all besides which the vast forests crown.  
Of antlers to bear lights the whole way up,  
Each skull surmounted with a Gothic cup,  
To suit the granite steps, a Bard might sing ;  
For these were recent presents from the King ;  
But now he's near the tower's vaulted crown,  
Whence through a narrow casement he looks  
down.

Below are other towers, high roofs, and courts,  
To which a motley throng by day resorts,  
Yielding some solace in that solitude  
Which even inmates here would oft elude,  
As when at Aranjuez, Spanish Kings,  
Were pleased to witness common, vulgar things ;  
Choosing those apartments that could yield  
For observation a continued field.  
So here you heard the horses prance and neigh,  
The grooms and other servants talk and play.  
While in the centre o'er a drawbridge came  
Unnumber'd friends with purpose not the same.  
This varied scene below involved in night,  
Presented then no objects for the sight.  
Not so the turret's still lit radiant top,  
Where through that window he must gaze and  
stop.

No never will the moment and the spot,  
By the quite ravish'd stranger be forgot.

One purple vast interminable line  
(Where nothing but the clouds could longer shine)  
Of forest lay beneath him where he sat ;  
Pray pause a moment and just think of that.  
Think of the colours of that autumn sky,  
Think of those domes of woods which though so  
    high  
Stretch'd low beneath him, right and left as far  
As he could see beyond the casement's bar ;  
Their upper edges one soft crimson hue,  
Beneath them blackness tinged with greenish blue,  
The giant trees were thus so near the walls  
Which lined the Court with offices and halls.  
Think of that silence up aloft, around,  
Where nothing living but himself was found,  
So far removed he seem'd from all below,  
Who pass'd in darkness down there to and fro.  
Yes, picture all this and that granite seat,  
The last, where mounting higher none you'll meet ;  
Then say if true romance were not found there  
As in its native and especial lair,  
Enough to raise up Radcliff once again  
To bring back Fancy's ever-glorious reign.

But now that silence of the Court was broken  
By wheels and sounding hoofs which gave him  
    token  
Of the arrival of another guest,  
Who had been long expected by the rest,  
As one, the noblest of those noble dames,

Of whom each speaking chivalry he names.  
So then the Bard apparell'd fresh hastes down  
Where a bright banquet that grand day will  
crown.

Now gold and silver sparkle, goblets, glass,  
Flaggons and beakers, one resplendent mass.  
Wild boar and turkeys, and the Boulrier baisse,  
In which are mingled fish of sundry race,  
Hearing which named he cried with such a tone,  
'Twas thought he must an epicure have grown,  
Although it was of Thackeray he thought,  
And his affecting poem, as he ought;  
But this was not the time to tell such things,  
When the whole hall with names Ambrosian  
rings—

White Muscatel and sweetest Frontinac,  
Rhenish and Greek, of which there is no lack;  
These, with the wines of which fair France can  
boast,

The last that's tasted thought delicious most,  
Combine to yield a welcome to each guest,  
Whose talk gives pleasure more than all the rest;  
As he who hears the D'Esgrigny's were there  
With theirs will never luxuries compare.  
The genius of the noble host is found,  
If while you dine you only look around,  
Where festive paintings shining from the wall  
Add lasting lustre to his feudal hall.  
The goodness from his smiling face is guess'd  
When you behold him seated with the rest.

Genuines and vain with nothing ever fustlers,  
 Who musing till wine is drunk and curial matters :  
 Whose greatest pleasure is in languid ease  
 In meeting as each glance responsive eyes,  
 His sweetest joy appearing eye to be  
 Others made happy by himself to see.

Yet all was not even finish'd by that show,  
 As later hours and long past midnight know.  
 Strange hows the livelong night seem'd floating  
 there

All wakeful guests such as the Bard to scare.  
 He thought he heard deep sighs, protracted moans,  
 That seem'd almost of dying man the groans,  
 While footsteps moved through winding corridors,  
 And some saw open'd suddenly their doors,  
 To close as suddenly when eyes had caught,  
 Quick proof their chamber was not what was sought.  
 But still the cause of this I won't explain,  
 Unsolved the mystery must here remain;  
 Which only proved how truly he could say  
 Adventures and romance had mark'd the day.

## CANTO V.

### LOVE.

BUT now it still is left us to explain  
 How Love durst venture in so rude a song,



Although of that there are who won't complain  
Like those who think to name it must be wrong.

A theme can't be obnoxious to reproaches  
That leads us to the brightest fields of thought,  
So now that for our play the end approaches  
We hope your favour not in vain was sought.

As when two lovers see themselves observed  
With smiles by matrons gentle as can be,  
Those whose sweet age mature has never swerved  
From thinking of such pairs with charity ;

And they feel inward pleasure from the way  
That these look on them and about them guess,  
As if to see them were a holiday,  
To wish them pastime what they would express ;

So should we now feel blest if your regard  
Of friendliness would prove a quick disclosure ;  
Nor should we care much for the censures hard  
Of those who advocate such fields' enclosure.

To see we're look'd on by the stranger met,  
As taking in that interlude a part,  
Which sunny natures never can forget,  
Is to apply a cordial to the heart.

We can't dispense with wishing you our friends,  
Thinking you must be still to nature true ;  
So when the curtain falls and all this ends,  
We would at least have pardon whole from you.

This love sooth proves a mystery for all ;  
It is not what some skill'd declaimers say,  
Nor what will for such shouts of haro call,  
Nor what 'tis deem'd in novels of the day.

It rather seems to justify the laugh  
Of some who trace it to a tender brain  
" Resembling pap " say they, as if to chaff  
Those in life's sweetest era with its pain.


Why one should be all company, admired,  
Known to be good and clever as she's fair,  
Of whom in daily life you ne'er grow tired,  
For whose true, real interest you would care ;

And yet who never dives into your heart,  
Or in a moment carries it away ;  
As will another, all love, taught no part,  
Is what nor I nor you can ever say.

And then that other, who can sing of her  
In words that will cold reason understand ?  
The thought of whom can act so like a spur,  
The slightest touch of which you can't withstand.

As loadstones draw the iron so will she  
Attract you by a strange unconscious force ;  
Two beings tuned in unison to be,  
One for resistance left without resource.

Why palpitates your heart when she draws near ?  
Why in her presence feel you so at rest ?



Forgetting doubts, misgivings, selfish fear,  
To know that next her bosom you are blest?

This is what no one upon earth can tell;  
Affinities of nature you may say,  
Or you may try vain reasonings with the spell,  
But sigh or laugh the mystery will stay.

One of great Nature's wonders in our sphere  
Are these distinctions when we thus can cull  
From all our race just one that will appear  
The good, the true, the simple, beautiful.

Out of the million others, none alike,  
There is but one that we consider best,  
At least as such that can our fancy strike,  
And therefore chosen over all the rest.

Oh happy is the man who has combined  
The two constituents of happy life—  
To have the same home, no less the same mind,<sup>1</sup>  
Which last destroys the seeds of wretched life.

But if the first of these main stays should be  
Not instantly attainable by all,  
Must we the second without action see  
When it makes nothing of true worth to fall?

Avaunt the wretch who violates a bond,  
But suffer to be faithful the unchain'd,  
Who without grieving Heaven may yet be fond,  
And wear his robe of manhood free, unstain'd.

<sup>1</sup> *δμναλεῖν* and *δμνολεῖν*.

Hymen without Love's bow is sometimes left,  
Is that a reason why the boy should be  
Of every commendation quite bereft,  
As if a dream of bad mythology ?

Guilty and stupid both must be the times,  
When enmity to Heav'n prefers worst wrong ;  
Is that a reason to condemn all rhymes  
That would repeat Love's whispers in a song ?

Yes, call him what you will, he has his rights,  
And 'twas of these alone that we would sing ;  
He lends his quiver to cause just delights ;  
And surely then, he is no hostile thing ?

Oh why should men traduce the joy of life?  
A reasonable source of love divine ;  
That reasonable joy which hates man's strife,  
That makes all nature with enchantment shine ?

That makes them love the poor, the child, the  
youth,  
Enamour'd with one woman's humour, wit,  
That teaches them to see each thing in truth,  
Or with her eyes to metamorphose it ?

As it is somewhat that in her they trace  
Which handsomeness diffuseth through the crowd,  
That makes them think they love the human race,  
Though not a word of this they say aloud.

While other things have fill'd their breast with  
sorrow,  
That seem'd to end but in sepulchral vaults,  
From her for ever without fear they borrow  
Millions past counting of contented thoughts.

A conscience unsophisticated here  
Finds nought that is not open and off-hand,  
It has no subtle casuist to fear,  
'Tis what the simple best will understand.

With such impressions and convictions moved,  
We sung the stream, the field, the mossy seat,  
Invoking memories which all disproved,  
The bitter words of those who Love ill-treat.

We hoped to show how it with Goodness vies,  
Contented with its own exploits alone !  
For what produces most these hostile cries  
Is the ambitious folly of its tone.

Prompting bad means, prosaical expense,  
Demanding more than nature ere requires,  
While it departs from rules of common sense,  
And what is foreign to itself admires.

Provoking thus a needless enmity  
By wanting trains of consequences long,  
Not one of which agrees with poetry,  
And which, as Charron says, alone are wrong.

Like bees that break out in the summer time,  
We saw in mind all adolescence stray ;  
We saw a landscape full of smiles—no crime,  
When midst the woods and flowers it took its way.

But it is time to finish. All things bright  
Have critics who condemn their form or tone,  
So it will be with all this fresh delight,  
And some there must be who will Love disown.

Like gloomy dandies of a former day  
They stalk on tiptoe ere the ways are foul,  
Pretending lovers must defile the way  
'Gainst " what is vulgar "—setting up a howl.

Mingled with height their countenance is sad,  
Put on expressly to discourage love,  
To show not only that they think it bad,  
But that all common spheres they are above.

Like those who seek great notoriety  
For what they call a character of sense,  
Who haughtiness will deem propriety,  
Which mercilessly meditates offence.

Your critic's college holds a skilful tribe;  
Their silence is a measure to aggrieve  
All those whose thoughts and names they would  
proscribe,  
Though e'en their favour sometimes can deceive.

Won in a way of which we need not speak,  
But rather o'er it let oblivion fall.  
Their previous studies oft have left them weak,  
While they are quite unconscious of it all.

How skill'd are they to ridicule and vex,  
To find the words exact that wound most deep ;  
To metamorphose what may them perplex,  
That they themselves the best success may reap.

Their name is noble, but their case is hard ;  
We should not ask from any man too much :  
How can they all self-interest quite discard ?  
Alas ! how many authors too are such !

Poor things ! they have an animal to feed—  
The reading public, with the same wants ever—  
As Plato said—the men who daily need,  
What in the common parlance is call'd clever—

Phantoms of good that serve to nurture Pride,  
That shun sweet airs from Nature and from  
Heaven ;

Whose voice now echoes o'er all the world wide,  
That nought opposing them may be forgiven.

All authors now must hear it and obey ;  
To what our journals like they must subscribe,  
To please them think like others of their day ;  
You don't suppose that they would take a bribe.

Yet e'en from these we would withdraw in peace,  
And grant that silence which they would require ;  
From such resistance they can have release,  
For men, at last, will of their own selves tire.

'Tis they themselves who often are the first  
To own how little they have done for others ;  
How vainly any one themselves can trust,  
How self-deceit their best intention smothers.

Ignoble words the Muse would not allow,  
Though by men self-applied an unused way ;  
But one name just in thought some utter now,  
And to themselves that dissyllable say.

They yield what is demanded, that relief,  
No longer singing in their little hour ;  
Buoy'd up with hopes no more. O Time and Grief,  
At last triumphant you will all devour—

Excepting only that imparted mind,  
With which all former raptures were allied ;  
Of gratitude for joys of every kind ;  
For that ne'er pall'd on hearts like theirs or died.

## CANTO VI.

### ON FAITH.

ANOTHER subject of complaint will be  
That the old faith is set to Poetry ;



And surely some will say it must be wrong  
To choose that theme for subject of a song,  
Or even of a Play that should be framed  
To suit what the "humanities" are named,  
Without much knowledge of their true extent,  
Which comprehend much more than oft is meant ;  
For think, and say, and do just what you will,  
The human and Divine are blended still.  
But why should it be wrong ? We ask in turn,  
On that point, therefore, we must now sojourn.

What we all seek for and what many find,  
Is some one interest paramount for mind ;  
Not one exclusive of our common joys,  
But one which all and each no less employs,  
As more or less essential to the whole,  
That would be incomplete with one part sole  
Omitted, interest lasting (mark this well),  
Not one that age or sorrows can dispel ;  
But one at all times equally to suit,  
And aid alike in every pursuit.  
Now nothing less than this can satisfy,  
Or prove a good on which we can rely ;  
And therefore will the Muse decide that we  
Should find this subject fit for Poetry.  
In prose or verse it was no just offence,  
When this was brought home to our common sense ;  
And, so to make you feel this all the more,  
We'll light on matters that we touch'd before.

What strange infatuation in the mind,  
That Pagan errors will so gladly find !  
To hear of gods and goddesses none think  
That they must always feel their spirits sink.  
But once allusion's made to truth Divine,  
The case is alter'd wholly they opine.  
A sudden chill seems to pervade their being,  
To chase away all genial, joyous feeling.  
It should be shown that to all minds like these,  
(What those of greatest culture ought to please,)   
That when the ancient faith will greet them here,  
They should with passion love it as most dear ;  
Since it can yield them means as to all others,  
Whereby it noxious seeds of evil smothers.  
Poetry calls Passion to its side,  
But with this faith should Passion be allied :  
For good supreme should not be coldly view'd,  
Nor grateful passion for it be eschew'd.  
To love what's good with passion good we call,  
Although to hate its foes so would spoil all.

Think first how just authority is good,  
When all its laws are rightly understood !  
How wise it is to be by such means ruled,  
And not be by men's reasoning befooled,  
Such as to wisdom of the earth is known,  
When upon mankind t'would impose its own.  
Of course the whole depends on what you say  
Upon this first point, whether "yes" or "nay :"  
If you assent the course thenceforth is such

That you need never waste your reason much ;  
To common matters you can then attend ;  
Of controversy you have found the end.  
But what can be more pleasant or more wise  
Than so to rest where no one wins who tries ?  
For 'tis the will not knowledge that's required,  
When by this ancient Faith men are inspired.  
Only in part we know of all that's there,  
And to know more now none of us need care :  
What's wanted is an humble, full submission,  
And of the Faith that's prompted an admission,  
With which we can be free to leave the whole,  
For future knowledge that awaits the soul.  
Philosophers have elsewhere business got ;  
Here they can leave, for they are wanted not.

One consequence of this authority is such,  
Methinks humanity should love it much.  
It is that by its means we all agree,  
As if, in fact, we were one family.  
In common life how pleasant is it still,  
To have, with all those whom we see, one will !  
For months and days and hours the same observance  
Of each thing you might think the same allowance ;  
To speak, eat, sing and whistle like the rest !  
To be the same in grave things must be best.  
Well, e'en in England, since three hundred years,  
This union never wholly disappears.  
Nature herself with Faith is so allied,  
At least in feelings you can't her divide.

How sweet is it to find whole countries thus,  
Doing exactly what is done by us !  
'Tis sweet to think that even follies prove,  
When known to all, a motive fresh for love ;  
As when we in minutias are the same,  
And follow customs with their well-known name ;  
So that when some results seem rather queer,  
As subject to them, all become more dear.  
For nothing makes us feel more like a brother,  
Than when we thus can laugh at one another.  
By family affection we seem bound  
Each to each stranger all the whole year round ;  
We love our country most, as the most known,  
But for all mankind some affection own.  
So that e'en death or a more solemn day,  
If while together still would not dismay.  
Thus all through life and e'en beyond it so,  
Still fonder of each other we shall grow.  
Humanity, as such, is then so raised,  
The Faith which so unites it must be praised ;  
They work together for the same great end,  
And therefore surely is this Faith our friend.

Then when you come to view things in detail,  
You find that Faith will all through life avail :  
Its unobtrusive force leaves you so free,  
That none besides seem blest with liberty.  
Dear heart, it is not a Procrustean bed,  
Whate'er by foes or silly friends is said.  
The very name denotes it is for all,

And not more for the great than for the small ;  
With adaptations infinite for each,  
And more perhaps than 'twill expressly teach.  
Although so varied in their tastes and views,  
Men find that it will serve them like the Muse ;  
Receiving with the mildest condescension  
The homage e'en of thoughts they dare not mention.

So like a wise and tender mother still,  
Regarding less the action than the will ;  
Which when that is in harmony with truth,  
For all Faith cares, may have its freaks forsooth.  
Of utterances it makes no parade,  
It seeks to work its purpose in the shade ;  
And one result of its great presence there,  
Of which or soon or late men are aware,  
Is that it tends to happiness on earth,  
And to serene and constant thoughts gives birth.  
Now this ought to have weight methinks with all,  
By whatsoever name that Faith they call.  
How it can do so one no more can tell,  
Than how it is in health you feel so well.  
But taking lowest ground for observation,  
One might perhaps accept this explanation.  
It gives a cheerful turn to the mind,  
By rendering men practically kind ;  
And that, too, with a hospitable head,  
To take in and then lodge what may be said  
By others, having ever room for all,  
That don't to Reason for exclusion call ;

Reserving thus a corner open, free,  
For thoughts of friends whoever they may be.  
The "supportantes invicem" alone,  
When well obey'd must yield a joyous tone.  
Faith tends to mental health by drainage too,  
(I know no other word here that will do,)  
By drying up at length all loathsome springs,  
By keeping it conversant with bright things;  
By throwing open to it fields sublime,  
And showing it the glories of past time.  
For on the past it will much rather dwell  
Than on the future which desire is well.  
The past is food for wisdom not for pride;  
The future you presume will take your side;  
So while the first is found upon your shelf,  
The last proves that you only prize yourself.  
To happiness, besides, this Faith will tend,  
By giving to your toils a worthy end—  
By causing some variety each day,  
Which for the same end proves no less a way,  
By its known practice, which experience proves  
One source of life's monotony removes.  
If these be facts it matters not what's said;  
From first to last there is no cause for dread.

But now indeed in questions of this sort  
There is one test to which we should resort,  
And that consists in simply trying how  
Each thing accords with woman's sense and vow.  
Then, sooth experimental knowledge here

Demonstrates what we say and makes it clear.  
For woman in her normal state agrees  
With this old Faith, as everywhere one sees.  
No land on earth in which we do not find  
How this yields charms to her youthful mind.  
Without it, in accordance with its tone,  
As naturally Catholic we own,  
But with it causing even Love to trace  
Enhanced those beauties in her air and face.  
Her eyes will speak as plainly as before ;  
But to their power there is added more.  
Have but her sense, and do what she'd commend,  
'Tis a great step to reach the highest end.  
Foundations laid in manliness and sense,  
What good can't follow that has no pretence ?  
No doubt she does possess a certain clue,  
By means of which she's apt to find the true.  
Is it the goodness of Faith's common law  
From which this knowledge she is skill'd to draw ?  
Is it the faithful love from which all springs  
Which gives to her intelligence such wings ?  
Is it her special intercourse with Heav'n  
Thinking of Him by whom are sins forgiven ?  
Is it her mystic sympathetic bond  
With things immortal, human life beyond ?  
I know not, though the fact itself is clear,  
As to a practised eye would soon appear.  
But that which so can win the woman's heart  
Must the true good supreme for all impart ;  
And this perhaps explains in part why More

On women friends set always such great store,  
As did our English martyr if you hear  
Erasmus telling what to him was dear.

To common wants however let's return,  
And not with one sex only make sojourn.  
Then passing in review what Faith requires  
You'll find it is what man no less admires.  
Men to be fair ought never to confound  
The ways of fools (which can be always found)  
With those of all who held the Faith still free  
From rashness, error, and hypocrisy.  
Ages will differ with their measures too ;  
To bind them all together will not do.  
Some have been cruel, obstinate, perverse,  
Others (where these have err'd so) the reverse.  
Wherever kindness, mercy, you behold,  
Fair, noble judgments, whether new or old,  
There and there only should you ever seek  
The Faith that will endow alone the meek.  
Men will be tyrants, servants of the letter,  
But charity is that which it can't fetter ;  
And charity of Faith is life and soul ;  
When this is absent 'tis delusion whole.  
Perhaps you think this old Faith harsh and stern ;  
If so, then on this point you've much to learn.  
Yea, even take the things that seem austere,  
You'll find they are not what they first appear.  
The abstinence and fast and law for prayer,  
Experience teaches later joys prepare.



They all effect a purpose even now,  
Increasing pleasure, as the frank allow.  
Yes, even certain instances are known  
When simple people stranger things will own ;  
As when to make confession some applied,  
Who were not of the Faith, and were denied,  
But with such kind impressive words of course  
As proved to them of tears an instant source,  
Telling them such things were not what they  
thought,  
That they were not yet what to be they ought ;  
Yet they withdrew, declaring all the same  
That they were still quite glad they thither came.  
These poor things so rejected went their way,  
Gayer than e'er they had been till that day.  
These children of Dame Nature only knew  
That rites though maim'd had yielded pleasure new.  
Ah, gentle stranger, think but of the poor !  
And how this Faith would all their sorrows cure.  
Let Hood be heard to strike his plaintive lyre ;  
Then mark what this religion would inspire.  
Would it be cold reproaches such as men  
The most esteem'd for wisdom mutter then ?  
You'd think you heard no word but this "forgiven ;"  
Your only thought would be the joys of Heaven.  
Those who in life had caught Faith's sounds in  
part,  
Had felt you've heard the balsam in their heart ;  
Then how much more would they have joy'd, just  
think,

If once attach'd they felt the heavenward link—  
That mystic chain which draws souls upward so,  
As even Homer dreamt of long ago ?  
What would the Benediction prove for these ?  
Just Heav'n on earth as one might say one sees ;  
When the whole world—whate'er to time belongs—  
Dwindles to nothing at those mystic songs.

Then mark again how Faith will correspond  
With that of which the human heart is fond,—  
Good nature, generosity, the will,  
That human warmth should be with virtue still,  
And how it never would in fine reverse  
Plans of the Artist of the Universe.  
For first observe with what unfeign'd respect  
It treats His work, its fashion and effect.  
See what it makes of youth and then of man,  
Though life observe its action as you can ;  
Sanctioning and recognizing what  
Only false zealots blame and would have not.  
Such as that Love which can be made agree  
With man and woman's true felicity,  
All treachery and falsehood warding off,  
Denouncing those who would at honour scoff,  
Yea, abdicating even its own crown,  
Seeming content to be the lowest down,  
If only Honour is allow'd to be  
The monarch to be served in secrecy ;  
Honour, that now on earth seems so bereft,  
“ Only a few dismantled castles left,”

Honour, the old and true, which will avow  
'Tis but the servant of Religion now ;  
So that those most submissive to her law  
The breath of freedom more than all men draw.  
This Faith is so unselfish and so free,  
'Twould act just like a woman loved by thee,  
Who to you saying, " It is all for her,"  
Would call attention off, and so demur,  
Not caring though you should conceal her name,  
Provided only you will act the same.  
She does so hate the vulgar, coarse parade  
Of those who soon can hypocrites be made,  
That she'd prefer by whispers to be known  
To being by loud words pronounced your own.  
For circumstances vary and demand  
This time, the prudent, and the next what's grand.  
She'd leave it to the chivalry of man  
To do for her whatever best he can,  
Whether to guard in silence or proclaim  
His heart's deep worship and her real name ;  
As if, however faithful, fond and true,  
Silence might serve her oft as well as you ;  
Though as for always saying which is best,  
She's quite content to leave with you the rest.

Yea, more than this, observe how she descends  
To own where all her matchless glory ends—  
E'en her exclusive privilege to show  
What great God in Heaven wishes man to know.  
There's weather in the mind as in the sky

When cold fogs gather and you nought descry.  
Your faith appears obscured thus one might say,  
When hearing boast the sceptics of our day,  
Respecting all the Oriental creeds,  
As proving of Religion still the seeds.  
Well the old faith of Christendom recoils  
From thinking that such facts her white robe soils.  
What ! Because Buddbists, Moslems, fast and pray,  
Is she less free to do the same as they ?  
Has she to blush because the strange Hindoo  
What she with truth with errors gross will do ?  
Or must she falter and renounce her claim  
Because of goodness Asia thinks the same ?  
E'en teaching that 'tis pious to avoid  
From doing what would others have annoy'd,  
And that when possible men should refrain  
From giving any living creature pain ?  
Unlike the upstarts who'd monopolize  
For their own glory what all men would prize,  
This ancient Faith, coeval with mankind,  
Exults a likeness to herself to find  
In all who have the same wish to adore,  
However scanty be their scraps of lore.  
So when she will invite you to her shrine  
She says, " Revere with all men the Divine."  
She knows indeed much more, though still in part;  
Distrust her not then when she asks your heart ;  
She has behind her, standing as it were,  
All that is great with wisdom everywhere.  
Do what you will, and take whatever view,

If you refuse you're a disgraceful few,  
Such as the world of human minds will scorn  
As mere abortions that should ne'er be born.  
In her, all holy, all good will remains,  
All that still sounds so grand in ancient strains.  
Without their errors in her you will find  
The one great faith and practice of mankind;  
So that she seems disposed to yield her crown,  
Not merely now to Honour, kneeling down,  
But to what foes will not expect to trace,  
To the collective wisdom of our race,  
Which so far with this Faith will still agree  
Confessing God and immortality.  
Such thoughts may seem as not distinctive, clear;  
But short reflection makes their use appear.  
They are not needed often, it is true;  
But there are moments when they might serve you  
More than precise and stringent definitions,  
Or of much sacred learning ebullitions.  
Harsh human lines and wholly unelastic  
Felt hard for instants may seem then fantastic.  
There is a tendency within us all,  
By whatsoever name we danger call,  
Like a destructive germ to explode  
As if we cast off an oppressive load,  
Whereby all faith is lost in things divine  
Amidst a cloud of words, pretentious, fine!  
Which only serve to hide the desolation  
That's sure to follow from that conflagration,  
Down as it were within the shafts below

Where pass catastrophes as many know.  
Minds are a dark and labyrinthean pit,  
More fraught with danger as it is more lit,  
At least for rude, bold workmen like ourselves,  
Each of whom there incautiously still delves.  
Descend with school points by the skill'd made out,  
With lights that theologians cast about,  
And there is danger in the breast's deep mine  
Lest these at last may for destruction shine.  
Some careless or malicious wretch applies  
His fetid match, and your religion dies.  
But these same thoughts like safety-lamps can shed  
A light which need no force explosive dread,  
So long as Reason holds her wonted sway,  
Whatever vapours may beset the way;  
Therefore to give these thoughts I thought not  
wrong,  
Still heeding most the object of my song,  
Which although fraught with follies I allow  
Was meant to side with Christian truth as now.  
To laugh one day and kneel with tears the next,  
Such is still nature be you e'er so vex'd.

And then descending to details of life,  
See how this faith wards off all vulgar strife,  
See how it sweetens seasons in their course,  
Yielding to suit each time the best resource,  
An occupied and a harmonious mind,  
Which has employment varied for each kind,  
Even a change of thoughts to suit—the spring,

The winter, autumn, summer, some true thing  
That alters with the changes of the year,  
Till each while lasting will the best appear;  
So that the spheres themselves will seem to turn,  
That with fresh incense human hearts may burn.  
Winter brings beauty by our Saviour's birth,  
The spring from Easter joy and lasting mirth,  
Summer will smile afresh on all who see  
The circle of the saints' felicity!  
And Autumn while admiring their crown  
Will shed sweet tears on those whom Death struck  
down,  
"All Saints" a way to Heaven while wending  
there,  
"All Souls" reunion through the sweets of prayer.  
No Poet's "Seasons" can enchant the mind  
If these not added to his song you find.

Then this old Faith it is which can explain  
All that will now from ancient times remain.  
From Eden's garden to the present age  
Some light this Faith will throw on every page.  
But here we need not dwell, for now I see  
An audience practised in humility;  
True to its nature, sensible and gay,  
Attentive e'en to trifles of the day—  
As that it should be, must have been intended,  
Audience that does not need to be defended,  
Olympiads and Dynasties disdaining,  
Urbe conditas as not worth retaining;

That troubles not itself with time-worn lore,  
But the last fashion would seek news of more,  
That thinks not much of epochs or of kings,  
What Livy tells of, or what Homer sings.  
But suitable attractions I must show,  
Which our friends present will be pleased to know.  
For without boasts they'd like to hold a clue  
By which they could distinguish what is true  
In all these talk'd-of, doubtful ways of life,  
Through which they have to wind 'midst endless  
strife,

So that no journal which they read to-day  
Could leave them, without knowing, what to say,  
Mere patient victims to some artful pen  
That would mislead and mystify them then.  
For thinking that this clue is only found  
By the old Faith we daily find fresh ground.  
Without it only see how men will change  
Their views of all things as through life they  
range.

They think to-day what they think not to-morrow;  
What pleases this year will the next cause sorrow.  
A Patriot now, anon a tyrant proud,  
Each public man they praise or blame aloud.  
Alternately each statesman is the best  
Who persecutes or lets the old Faith rest.  
"Sum pius Æneas" is enough to mask  
The proud designs of an aggressive task;  
And if a lawful king be but defied,  
"The progress of the age" won't be denied.



So judgment, as the Poet says, seems fled  
From men to beasts, whatever may be said.  
Why, or how far, they should praise that or this,  
Is knowledge that 'tis clear they're apt to miss.  
Germans or French, they find no special cause  
Why one distrusts, the other favour draws.  
Yet from the first, 'twere surely well to know  
What you should think of Bismarck raging so?  
When the two Powers are there no longer found,  
Can all be safe for liberty and sound?  
Should the "State-laws" be guide enough for it?  
To them is it sufficient men submit?  
Is every ancient page to be effaced  
Because on it no Prussian mind is traced?  
Is Sophocles no more your praise to win  
Because a voice has gone forth from Berlin?  
Reversing all his views of right and wrong,  
When Creon's "state-law" he defied in song?  
Or if for Gentile Poets you care nought,  
Are persecutions to be wisdom thought?  
To this I trust you scarcely will agree,  
However light you think of Poetry.

But then you say suppose I hold your clue,  
How can I know that this will lead me true?  
Do not all sects imagine they see clear,  
However changed to others they appear?  
Yes. But observe the clues that they supply  
Are never found in all past history.  
Whereas this Faith still leads men as of yore

Through all past ages, and that's surely more !  
The clue that led the great of ancient times,  
Whose life with our best views of greatness chimes,  
Should hardly be compared with that you see  
Ephemeral when not fatuity—  
Without proceeding Logic to invoke,  
Which counts all other clues but as a joke.  
And then, what's more impressive, just survey  
The faithful populations past away.  
What joy found they in all these solemn rites,  
Amidst their sorrows what supreme delights ?  
What peace internal, what domestic rest,  
While others would revolt, how these were blest !  
This simple comprehensive view of things  
E'en of itself a true contentment brings ;  
Though in conclusion I would genius call,  
To own this good and ratify it all.  
The faith of Shakspeare, Dryden, Shirley, Pope,  
Is one with which no later Poets cope.  
The more you search the more you're sure to find  
The charm that faith has for the greatest mind.  
E'en Milton was forsaken at the last,  
When some one said he to that faith had pass'd.  
So that, I think, upon the whole you should  
Dismiss the charge, and say the Play was good.

Then let the young and gentle fear no more  
To be what all like them were once of yore ;  
Their humble rooms will never be less gay,  
Because within will shine Truth's sunlike ray.

Time will not prove more heavy on their hands,  
Because they follow what the Church commands.  
Their lips will be as free, their hearts as light,  
When saints and angels have not pass'd from sight.  
Their thoughts will not be sadden'd if they see  
A cross or sign of Catholicity.  
Nor will chance visits from some holy man  
Scare them as visits from some others can.  
No ; 'tis the young and gentle that should try  
The foremost to adopt what we descry.  
Their joys will be the greater, sorrows less ;  
No cares will worry, and no griefs oppress.  
The bad old nicknames of unbelieving men  
Will never frighten as dissuasives then.  
Methinks I hear the plaudits as we go  
Of some consenting whom we love and know ;  
More natural e'en now they cannot be,  
Nor good in common things that faith can see.  
But yet is there submission to display,  
Like all religious grandeur pass'd away—  
Submission to the plans ordain'd on high,  
By Him who made and rules the earth and sky.  
To that great law, our highest thoughts beyond,  
They find at length their minds will correspond.  
Perhaps the Muses even lend them fire  
To praise the old Faith and its ways admire  
With real passion, finding thus at last  
A joy that casts oblivion o'er the past.  
"To be a poet pious must man be,"  
Said Joubert. To see proof circumspect ;

For round you there are hearts that can adore,  
That feel like those of poets more and more ;  
'Till, hence departing, with their last faint breath,  
They say with wonder, " Oh, can this be death ? "

The rest is silence. Let the drop-scene fall.  
A short act opens that concludes it all.

### FINALE.

#### VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES.

No more ; it is finish'd, 'tis time we were gone ;  
It was vanity trying our best ;  
Then what can be said when these labours are done,  
Which such weakness alone can attest ;  
A restless anxiety so to escape  
From weariness wearing a multiplied shape ?

Like the juvenile playmate described before,  
Quite abash'd too like him, I would say,  
We must drop it ; 'twere better to play no more,  
Never, never, from this very day.  
'Twere time that we dropt it. How many will add,  
" High time," like the damsel who spoke to the lad.

What is life here for many but such a street,  
Where they gather to institute noise ;  
Yet this vanity cannot be always sweet  
Any more than it proved for the boys ;

In conscience alone finding reasons enough  
To confess that they merited that rebuff.

Oh sooner or later what man does not find  
How much vanity reigns here below,  
Such pains and vexations for body and mind !  
Disappointments that hopes overthrow.  
Though all men are not quite so sensitive grown  
As Ampère the far-famed of himself would own.

Yet who less disposed to take Tedium for guide  
Than that studious philosopher sage ?  
Whoe'er had an ocean before him more wide  
All great longings on earth to assuage ?  
Inventor of wonders that the world admires,  
As seen in electrical telegraph wires.

“ A sense of the nullity reigning around,”  
Said he, “ grows with me more still each day ;  
And throughout my whole being this sense is found,  
Although what it is I cannot say,  
Save for other existence an aspiration,  
Which proves here on this earth my sole consolation.”<sup>1</sup>

Men will not own some truths that wound their  
heart,  
However well or ill they've played their part.  
'Tis poor, and savours far too much of those  
Who like religious rhapsodies and shows.

<sup>1</sup> Journal d'André Ampère.

They'll only whisper to themselves at times,  
And tune their thoughts to Wisdom's holy chimes,  
That sound for all as if they were a knell,  
That vanity of vanities would tell.

Take first those who to mind repair,  
And say the best of life is there ;  
Like authors who think thought supreme,  
And other pleasures but a dream.  
But while these still would live in others,  
How soon experience that hope smothers,  
To justify deep Charron's prose,  
And make them feel the truth he shows.  
Says Castil-Blaze, " Let authors send  
Their prose or poem to a friend,  
And let them on the second page  
Write what would horrify the age,  
As how they once had poison pour'd  
Into the cup of one adored,  
That they had murder'd twenty men,  
And 'gainst the State conspired then ;  
And whatsoe'er the crimes may be,  
Such writing none will ever see  
Within the book proscribed already,  
For which there's no one ever ready.  
Their secret will as safely rest  
As if 'twere in an iron chest,  
Beneath a mountain buried deep,  
Where closed for ever it will sleep."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Castil-Blaze Molière musicien,

And then he cites another case  
Where a fond author wish'd to place  
His "book immortal" in some hand  
That public interest could command ;  
'Till, soon suspecting it would lie  
Unread in deep obscurity,  
He sends a blank roll'd book instead,  
Which must be unroll'd to be read,  
Which later, with its strings untied,  
Was criticized with no small pride,  
So vain are oft the hopes of those  
Who aim at Poetry or Prose !  
And then success in either fails,  
To yield their authors what avails.  
How often mentally the first  
Men feel for change a greater thirst !  
E'en Æschynes himself grew tired  
Of what he had so long admired,  
Sick of his rhetoric and prose,  
As Philostratus plainly shows ;  
Telling us how he left his school  
At Rhodes where he would no more rule,  
To teach young orators expression,  
Finding it vanity's profession.  
And then in thought's deep secret cells,  
How seldom true Contentment dwells !  
"The knowing nothing," men have said,  
"All nicely cramm'd within the head,  
Nor wishing even much for aught  
Quits many a vexatious thought,

Which quainter knowledge would produce  
 'To prove at last the mind's abuse."  
 If this be true of science wise,  
 What is that half made up of lies,  
 Which now so many will parade,  
 As if good sense no thoughts repaid ?  
 'Twas learned Varro who once said  
 " No sick man's dream was ever led  
 Such wicked folly to uncover,  
 As some philosopher or other  
 Has said, pretending to teach youth  
 What's call'd a scientific truth."<sup>3</sup>  
 Then Cicero, too, said the same ;  
 You'd think some of ourselves he'd name."<sup>4</sup>  
 Ampère was qualified to speak  
 When he found real Science weak.  
 " What is it all in fine," ask'd he,  
 " But purest simple vanity ?  
 'These vast conceptions so admired,  
 This reasoning that's never tired—  
 These great discoveries of men  
 Of genius, prompting, searching then—  
 A day will come that must unfold  
 Much more than all this ever told."  
 " Study," he added, " but beware  
 How reasoning with God you dare.

<sup>3</sup> — Nemo ægrotus quicquam somniat  
 Tam infandum, quod non aliquis dicat  
 Philosophus.

<sup>4</sup> Nihil tam absurdè dici potest quod non dicatur ab  
 aliquo philosophorum. (De divinat.)



Keep one eye open to this night,  
 The other to th' eternal light.  
 With one ear list what Science cries,  
 And with the other, what ne'er dies,  
 The voice of your great Heavenly friend  
 At which all vanity will end."<sup>5</sup>

"Friend," saith he rightly ; for now only see  
 Who else can prove so true a friend to thee.  
 And do not say men mystically rave  
 Respecting what their Creed says that He gave,  
 That Mercy's throne may always be above  
 Their trespasses that do not war with love.  
 For if you will but think a moment here  
 You'll feel convinced that man to God is dear ;  
 And that the word in ordinary sense  
 Can be applied to Him without pretence.  
 Strange unexpected fact ! this truth was known  
 To the old heathens, as their poets own ;  
 For Juvenal has left this great assertion,  
 As if to Christians now in full reversion,  
 "More than man loves himself does God love  
 man ;"

Imagine truer friendship if you can.<sup>6</sup>  
 Alas ! for friendship, what is there more rare  
 Than perfect satisfaction reigning there ?  
 Perhaps 'tis that which vanity proves most,  
 However mortals of its truth may boast ;

<sup>5</sup> Journal d'Ampère.

<sup>6</sup> Carior est illis homo quam sibi, Sat. x.

Though now indeed in England many say  
Friendship once true, perhaps, has had its day.  
To cultivate it such men cannot stop ;  
And without some attention it must drop.  
Abandon social exigencies all,  
And friendship by degrees must needs look small ;  
Nor will looks be deceptive I suspect,  
For growth heroic no one should expect.  
On such a hideous theme let's not remain,  
But to reflect on God's love pause again.  
Still do not men contrive to let creep in  
E'en here some ways to vanity akin?  
For say what else are often even prayers  
When all engross'd with selfish earthly cares.  
Whereas not to be vain we men should be  
Like birds that simply sing upon the tree,  
Or as the lark at dawn that from its sod  
Raises its voice as if in praise of God.  
A " Deo gratias " never can be wrong ;  
'Tis like the blackbird's or the linnet's song.  
Nothing distinct of course you pray for then,  
Like many who conceal their thoughts from men ;  
'Tis rather like the Church's prayer we hear,  
That asks for nothing personal and clear.  
Might a poor minstrel make a faint suggestion  
Respecting what no serious people mention ?  
But now he's so accustom'd to digress  
He thinks he'll venture thus much to express.  
If often from ourselves we dare not pray,  
Prayer as from others we can alway say.

That we are some one else we can suppose,  
Be it the first lad in the street who goes,  
To whom we may have spoken perhaps once,  
To act his part the better for the nonce ;  
And then, as being truer, we shall dare  
As if from his own lips to say the prayer.

But oh the folly of the men who try  
To dictate measures unto God on high ;  
It is an author of the Middle Ages,  
Renown'd for many curious, holy pages,  
Who gives an instance very apropos,  
To indicate what comes from asking so.  
It was a Bard or Knight whose name is  
given,  
Who tells how he himself had thus pray'd  
Heaven.

Never but once in all his life had he  
Pray'd for a point express explicitly,  
In words distinct that left God strictly task'd,  
But then that one named gift was what he  
ask'd.

Well, it was granted to his sighs and tears,  
And what was the result in after-years ?  
Simply in all his life he felt no woe  
Like that which sprung from what was granted  
so.

This looks much like the vanity of prayer,  
When doing our own will is sought for there.

Then some again apply to Art,  
As if that could suffice the heart !  
Alack what thoughts will then pervade,  
Their being such examples made !  
“ Our Paintings ” to themselves say they,  
“ Prove we were useful in our day ;  
They will survive when we are dead,  
And kind things will of us be said.”  
So they continue painting on,  
Still hoping, though before they're gone,  
The chances are that they will see,  
How they found hopes sheer vanity,  
Exposed as they were to vexations,  
And consequently strange temptations.  
Let me an anecdote relate,  
To show what cares befall their state.  
It seems so exquisite and new,  
I can't but make it known to you.  
A certain Painter years ago,  
Whose name from me you shall not know,  
Gave to a church in Brittany  
A picture which you there can see.  
The curate died. Another came  
Who did not know the Painter's name ;  
When lately meeting him was found,  
For such vexation ample ground.  
For hearing him propose to paint  
For some one else his Patron Saint,  
This curate said, “ Pray do as much  
For me who also need one such.”

"But in your church," said he, "there's not  
For placing it a vacant spot."

"Yes, but there is," it was replied,

"Oh let me not be thus denied.

I need a picture just to cover

That hideous painting by some other—

Some Demoiselle, I have been told,

Who gave it to my church of old.

That naked figure of the dead

Can much disturb a modest head.

So hide for me that *vilaine toile*

Which some one's thought is sure to soil,

Although it be our Lord who lies

Before His Mother and our eyes."

The Painter "taken back" you'd say,

Replied in half a smiling way,

"Alas, alas! 'twas I who did

The Picture you would now have hid."

"Impossible," the other cried,

"'Tis not your painting I would hide ;

But that which my blame ne'er escaped,

As being far too slightly draped.

No judge of art am I," said he,

"But only of propriety.

It may be copied from the Louvre,

Of piety it is no mover.

Although of course the painting may


Be good as other people say."

This was a liniment applied,

And awkwardly to wounds so wide.

For the first stab of course was such,  
The Painter's cure could not be much,  
While finding after all his pains  
"A *vilain toile*" alone remains.  
The incident is quaint and droll,  
But it is only on the whole  
A specimen of what befalls  
Each who himself an artist calls ;  
Who though he e'en deserve that name,  
Is sure at times to meet with blame,  
Perhaps to see his figures clad  
By some house-plasterer, how sad !  
Who for the purpose scruples not  
To use for paint a white-wash pot.  
Such strange conclusive things will be  
To prove his hopes were vanity.

And then supposing nought like this,  
His object he will no less miss.  
How many ruins in that line  
Of what was once regarded fine !  
How many kinds of sad decay,  
Since Poussin painted in his way !  
The crack'd dark canvas grieves the eye,  
Or fading fresco asks a sigh.  
To what pitch darkness are consign'd  
The works that were for light design'd !  
Then England sooth accustom'd long  
To hear of it as something wrong,  
Will rather stare than like to see



If Pictures should in churches be.  
"Paint with the pen or with the voice"  
(To use their own, some will rejoice),  
"But come not with your canvas now"  
Say some to whom the others bow.  
So that a Painter has no chance  
To place a picture as in France.  
If to a church his work he'll send,  
He's pretty sure to see its end.  
It seldom hangs long on the wall;  
For "doing up all fresh" they call;  
The tradesman knows not much of art,  
But then you see he makes things "smart."  
And he soon hears the praises loud  
From (pardon me) the stupid crowd.  
How oft an artist's admiration  
Has echoes of but short duration!  
How many with their fancy hot  
Find that the public follow not,  
Who though long labour be the price,  
To cool them are repaid with ice!  
Perhaps, like Phidias at last  
With envy for their glories past,  
As when Minerva's statue won  
Exile and death for what was done.  
Though all the while can even Art  
Contaminate its owner's heart,  
Masters and pupils oft the same,  
Through jealousy their skill to shame,  
As Dedalus and Menon show'd,

In whom that passion found abode.

'Tis folly, therefore, to suppose  
That no vexation visits those  
Who seek by means of Art to fly  
From the wide reign of vanity.

But now as we advance through life  
Mark other sources of vain strife,  
Amongst which none cause more addition  
Than thoughts of family ambition,  
I mean not avarice low, sheer,  
Which in disguise will creep so near  
Whate'er is loftiest and best,  
On earth still never finding rest,  
But aims which wear so fair a dress  
As an ancestral nobleness,  
Still seeking to augment its glory  
That it may last in future story.  
Oh Fathers, ill-advised and fond  
Not to look far all this beyond !  
Can such hopes long exempt remain  
From being found amidst the vain ?  
The ancients must have been more free  
From this kind of stupidity.  
Nor Cicero nor Plato thought  
That after their own death they ought  
To mind much things that they have left,  
As if of nought they were bereft.  
But we, as Charron truly said,



Will ne'er admit we shall be dead ;  
And so the vanity of strife  
Must be protracted past this life.  
For this and that we make provision,  
As if we fill'd the same position ;  
Though what would please survivors best  
Would be to give ourselves whole rest.  
At least the hopes we entertain  
Prove quite ridiculously vain.  
Let history be heard to say  
What is discover'd on this way.  
Alas ! how families will fall  
And perish with their fortunes all !  
How little this way can be won  
When there is but a thoughtless son !  
Some young Lord Owe-much with his views  
So well known always to the Jews.  
In our old Dramas we can find  
How men in this way oft are blind—  
Paintings, books, castles in the air  
Scatter'd, dissolved, they know not where,  
Sheer vanity alone not gone,  
With that left them to work upon.  
Private collections seldom last,  
The auctioneer comes very fast.  
In ancient times it was far worse  
Than merely damage to the purse,  
Or grief at knowing who'll inherit  
Things that will be of unknown merit.  
Paterculus has left a line

Disposing of this theme in fine ;  
For, telling of the famed proscription,  
Of the triumvirs, past description,  
How woman's faithfulness was known  
As perfect and sublimely shown,  
"That of their sons," he adds, "was null,  
With no exceptions e'en to cull ;  
For their own Fathers they betray'd,  
For gain such traitors were they made."  
But now of course all this is changed,  
And sons may be with women ranged ;  
Regarding faithfulness and trust,  
Though still have ample means they must.  
No doubt 'tis changed ; but yet 'twere well  
If this all later times would tell.  
We live not in heroic ages,  
Whatever's said by our new sages.  
How many times Achilles thought  
Of his aged father as he ought !  
Left all so lonely then at home  
While he must at a distance roam.  
Greek is the only language known'  
That an apt special word will own  
For the attentions that belong  
To parents where they have no wrong ;  
And *ᾠπείρα* was the common word  
For what some sons would deem absurd ;  
Though oft 'tis fathers one should blame,  
While on their children lights the shame.

7 Mém. de l'Acad. tom. lxxi.

Sons not to have repaid the care  
Of parents made old Homer stare.  
Hippochoüs he pitied most,  
Because of this he could not boast,  
Dying so early, all so lost—  
The care his education cost.  
The gratitude of sons was thought  
A consequence by nature wrought.  
But that this end may still be miss'd  
Suspicious grounded can exist.  
At least I'll tell a wild tale here,  
That yields some reasons for such fear.  
'Twas told me by a noble Dame,  
To whose own knowledge first it came ;  
At a great banquet where 'twas said,  
"This letter tells the monster's dead."  
The letter came from the Bastille :  
What follows will the sense reveal.

A Marquis in the South of France,  
(The same who at that note must glance,  
Just brought him as he sat to dine,  
And sip in peace the sparkling wine,  
In d'Osmond's stately fine Hotel,  
Of which she'd many secrets tell,)  
Lived lonely in his old château,  
And not so very long ago ;  
As to infer you will be able,  
Since it was he who sat at table.  
One evening as he stroll'd alone

1

Appearing somewhat pensive grown,  
From the far limits of his park  
There was a carriage to remark,  
Proceeding to the castle gate,  
Where some one enters there to wait.  
A servant running then with speed,  
Came to him saying he had need  
Directly to come back to home,  
No longer through his woods to roam.  
"For there is just arrived," said he,  
"A stranger quite unknown to me ;  
Though here I've lived since days of yore  
Him I have never seen before.  
He tells me he must with you speak,  
And that I must my master seek."  
The Marquis changed his pace at once,  
And did not even make response.  
Arrived he found a stranger grave,  
Who ceremony would not wave ;  
As with politeness rather strain'd,  
He stood and gravity retain'd ;  
Till, looking round the room, he said,  
While bending to each side his head,  
"Excuse me, but I wish each door  
To close before I utter more."  
And then he whisper'd he was sent  
By the police with an intent  
Some serious secret things to state,  
Which he would now communicate.  
"There is," said he, "a plot laid deep,

To murder you in bed asleep—  
But come now, don't give way to fright—  
To murder you this very night.  
What's most essential is that you  
Your customary ways pursue.  
Tell me then where you're always found  
When twilight first steals o'er the ground ?”  
“ I stroll awhile in the parterre.”  
“ Well then at dusk you must be there.  
What next as evening will draw on ? ”  
“ I'm to the library gone.”  
“ So there I must conclude you read ?  
Then now to do so you'll have need.  
Then when 'tis time to seek your bed ?—”  
“ Through this long suite of rooms I'm sped,  
In passing which I feel no fright.”  
“ You must do so this very night.”  
“ What ! and leave open every door,  
As I have always done before ? ”  
“ Exactly-so. From nothing swerve,  
Or I cannot your life preserve ;  
Whereas if you accede to this  
Our plan is certain not to miss.  
Good night, my lord, I now must go ;  
But let your servants nothing know,  
And wear a common, smiling face,  
So that alarm they may not trace ;  
They'll think 'twas the adjacent town  
Which for some business sent me down,  
To have approval for the Mayor

To execute some new work there.  
But stop a moment,—I forgot,  
There's one thing that I mention'd not.  
To-morrow you will find the need  
To post to Paris, and with speed ;  
So you must order horses now ;  
They'll ne'er suspect it any how."  
The stranger left then as he came,  
And all things went on just the same,  
No item of the programme changed,  
But each part done as was arranged.  
The Marquis had been long in bed—  
At last he heard the distant tread  
Of some one in the farthest room,  
Who still came nearer through the gloom ;  
Till stealing towards his bed, he saw  
As near and nearer he would draw,  
A man whose dagger could be seen,  
The curtains but half closed between ;  
When suddenly, to his great wonder,  
Rush'd from his bed, which they lay under,  
Three agents, by whose skilful knack  
The culprit fell upon his back,  
His legs pull'd inwards from below,  
Before they would e'en their presence show.  
So kneeling on him all was done :  
It was the Marquis's own son,  
Long absent from his father's sight,  
Return'd from Paris that same night,  
Where he had led a wilful course

Of life which left him no resource ;  
And so no longer would he wait  
For his inheritance so great.  
The Marquis then was told to rise ;  
And at the dawn his carriage flies  
To Paris, whence he has to bring  
Letters of cachet from the king.  
The monarch seem'd to know the whole,  
Unable feelings to control.  
" There are the letters, take," said he,  
" Unhappy father, writ for thee."  
The Bastille then received his son.  
The case was hush'd up, all was done.  
So now that letter came to say  
The son at last had pass'd away.  
The fifteenth Louis acted thus ;  
The time was still so near to us,  
Not left without examples too,  
Of what some feel constrain'd to do.  
No doubt there may be fathers thus  
Still living though not known to us,  
Who neither joy nor comfort seek,  
Sad with the grief which dares not speak,  
Like those found in old English plays,  
Though painting chiefly foreign ways.

So still the Poet throughout life but sees  
The old proved vanity of vanities.  
What fields for a Menippus still are found !  
Lucilius, too, might culling here find ground,

With Ennius, Pacuvius no less,  
And Horace also who can well express  
The vanity of men in common life,  
So fraught with cunning, labours, cares, and strife;  
While even Satire scarcely can portray  
What to themselves the subjects of it say.  
And then, by men observant, soon or late  
Is seen the cruel irony of fate,  
So exquisite in curious adaptations,  
To yield the most appropriate vexations;  
Until, if by success you'd all things try,  
What's most complete is human vanity.  
In fact, as Webster truly said of old,  
If God fill not the heart's entangled fold,  
No infinite confusion ever can  
Exceed the deep and secret thoughts of man.

It matters not what projects there may be  
Which promise soon or late felicity;  
Let there be structures building, or fresh schemes,  
To realize some grand or joyful dreams,  
The fact is they will only be esteem'd,  
While of the future they as yet are deem'd.  
They're valued merely by their acquisition,  
Once ours to joy they're no such great addition,  
Or if they prove so, 'tis for a short while;  
Death will know how to clothe in black your style.  
What tragedies ne'er dreamt of in your mind !  
What friends, what looks, what words are there  
enshrined !



And yet through safest themes we've mostly  
pass'd,  
And things that we might think would longer  
last.

They've proved no more than ashes to the touch,  
Like dead-sea apples, just so, only such.  
Let me not then increase a countless store,  
Even by writing prose or verses more—  
Even by seeking friends that so contrive,  
Only in our tears thus to survive,  
Or in the breeze that still will bend the flower,  
Where once we sat together 'neath the bower  
Where now, O God, the vanity of earth  
Will intervene most to make pale all mirth,  
But let us cease with hope through life to range,  
And wait in patient silence for a change.

Since fly must what is truly loved and best,  
Would we with vanity acknowledged rest?  
Since satisfied we know can be no eye  
With seeing aught however long it try,  
Since satisfied no more can be an ear  
With hearing whatsoever sound is here,  
'Tis surely foolish in our mind to stay  
With what lies thus upon the present way,  
Whether it be in sight or in a sound,  
Existing round us as on this earth found;  
And not to seek in all things far or nigh,  
The unseen, unheard, unknown harmony.

A "transformation-scene" will come for all,  
Let's wait for it, although the curtain fall,  
Which is but darkness, as it needs must be,  
To rise with views that no mind yet can see.  
'Tis to restrain us for a moment so;  
Then it will unveil what thoughts can't show.  
At least if God wills, merciful as just,  
And in whose mercy must be all our trust.

THE END.

MARCH 1876.

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